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JUNE '11
ISSUE 198
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Davies
Train**

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**Seth
Wood**

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**Victor
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On the road

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**Rock
'n' Roll
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THE KING OF INK

MARIO BARTH

PART ONE WHAT HAPPENS IN VEGAS...



PAPA JOE'S
WRITING ON
THE WALL...

EXCLUSIVE

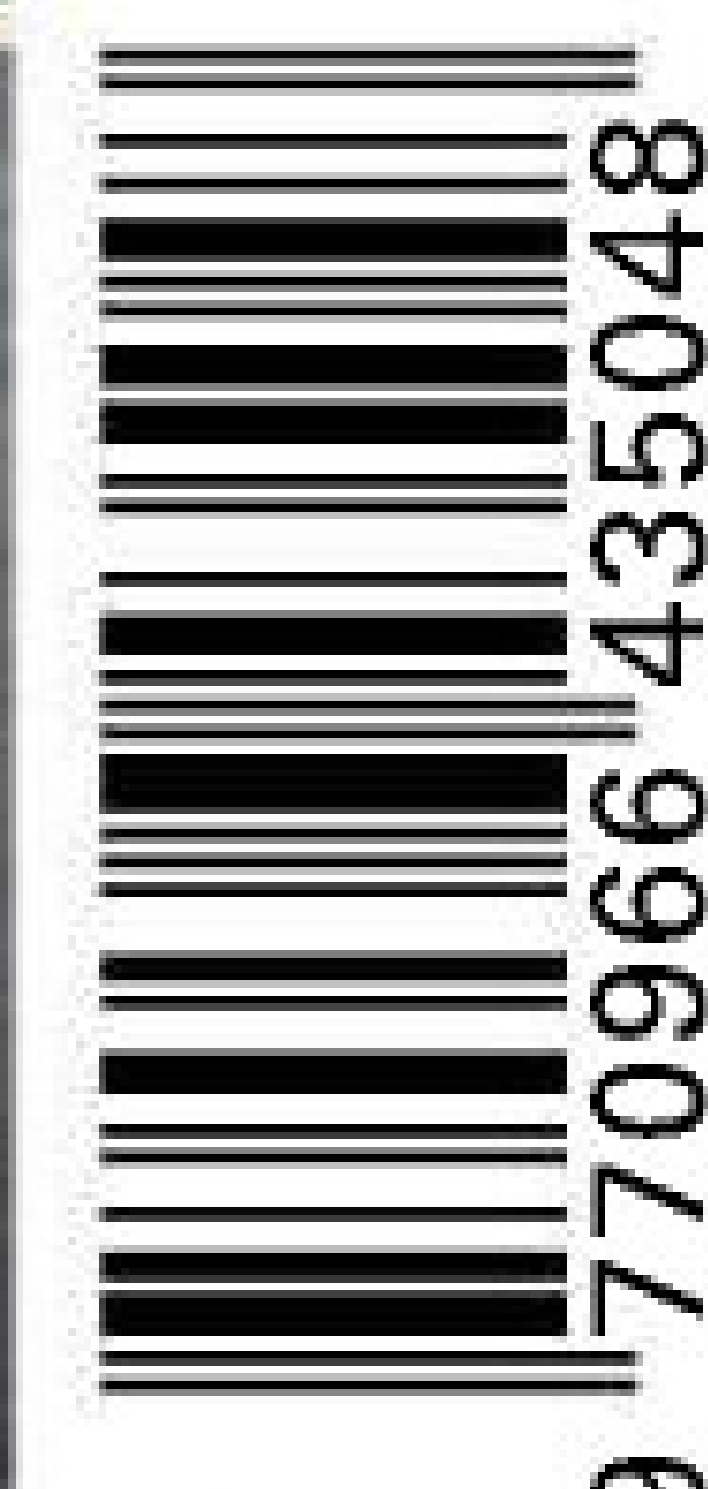
Adam Ant

unplugs in Woody's
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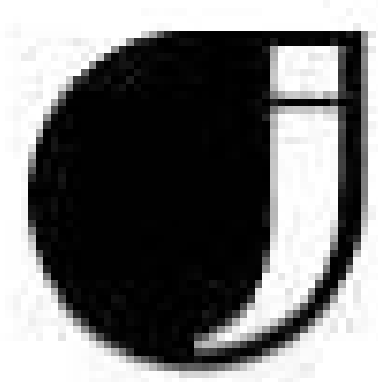
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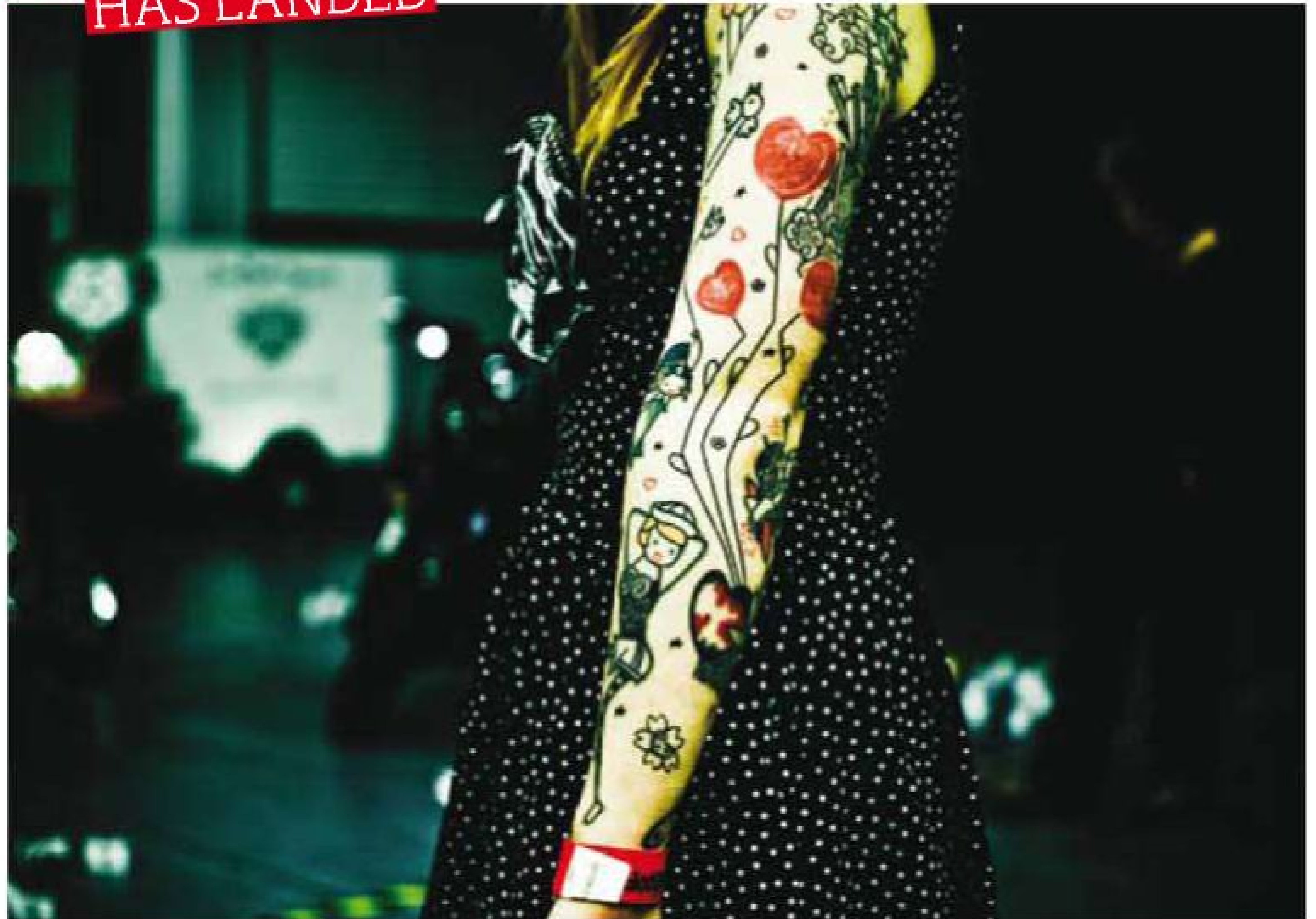
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THE NEEDLE HAS LANDED



THE WORLD ON A STRING

Quite often in the mail, I get sent cuttings from newspapers that I might have missed simply because, no matter how hard you try, you can't look at everything. You really can't - I've tried.

This week the guys at the office shipped me down the centre pages from The Sun (March 31) in which writer Sean Hamilton does a story on tattooing that pulls in quotes from a conversation with Lal Hardy. It bore the title "Skin The Money" and my gut reaction on seeing that title was to wonder what kind of assassination we had in store... but I was wrong.

It actually turned out to be a really positive piece of work. Reading through it again, for a newspaper that is renowned to sensationalise whenever it can, they stuck to the facts, there's no horror stories and it even contains a potted history lesson and decent advice. Impressed!

That very same week, I received a copy of Lal's latest book - The Mammoth Book of Tattoo Art and it's a peach. Seriously. We didn't have room for reviews in this issue (so it will be in next time), but having just put together Tattoo Dynamite here at Jazz, I know from the heart, that behind the scenes it will have been a labour of love with much blood, sweat and tears behind it. Mr Hardy turned in a fine piece of work - you should check it out.

Nice work Sir!

To rewind a little, at the top of the article in The Sun, it quotes the official figure of the number of tattoos on "British Bodies" as being 20 million. By my reckoning, even with all the years Skin Deep has behind it, we haven't even scaled the first leg of that mountain. I haven't actually worked this out, so don't quote me, but if your average issue of Skin Deep contains around 200 images, across almost 200 issues, that comes to approximately 40,000 images published in our lifetime. That's a really small percentage. I don't do maths and percentages but even I can tell there's a lot out there still to cover. Recent appeals for work by both artists, studios

and collectors have turned up some good stuff in the inbox - please keep it coming. It's much appreciated and wherever possible, it will get featured somehow.

Finally, it wouldn't be much of a Needle Has Landed column if I couldn't find something mildly amusing to write about - it seems to have become "what I do" on this page but I have to admit, I'm struggling this issue. There have been no piano playing luchadores passing my window, I don't think I've left my Mac for more than a single day (I blame Tattoo Dynamite) and only one Doctor Who submission has come in so far but then again, as I write this, the last issue has only been out for one day on the shelves. Nope, the only fun news I have - for me at least - is that with the back piece on hold for the time being, I've booked my slot for my next piece of sleeve work at the Jam. It's taken months to figure it out and now that I have the basics down, let's get it on...

I suggest you do the same... meantime, back to work slackers!

Sean



Mr Sion Smith

ISSUE 199 ON SALE

31ST MAY 2011



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Issue 199 www.skindeep.co.uk 3

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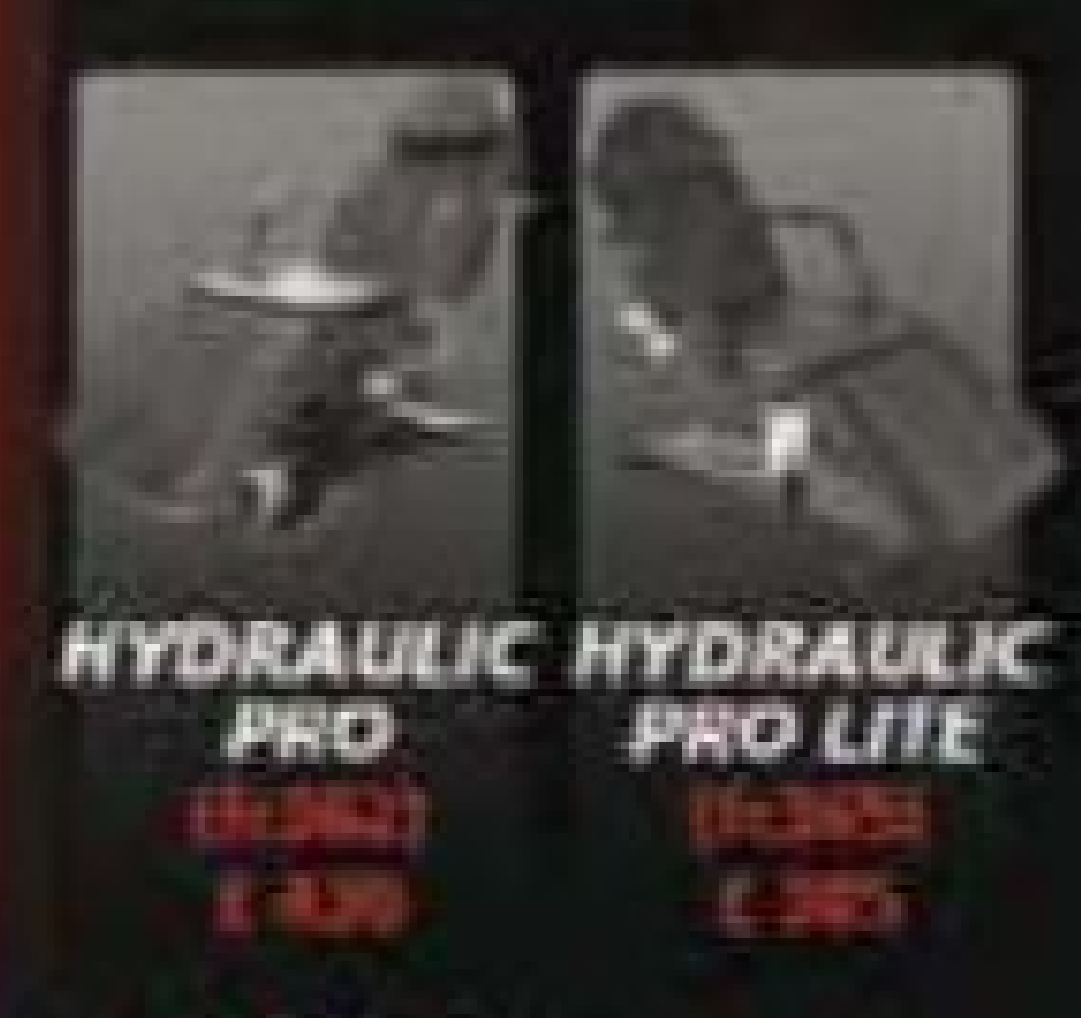
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Still on the road out in Europe here: this month we thought we'd see what the South of France had to offer in the way of talent - game on!

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Who can resist a studio with a name like Rock n Roll Tattoo, particularly when they've got talent seeping out of the walls? These guys just don't tattoo like anybody else...

FEATURED ARTISTS THIS MONTH:

- 28 **THE KING OF INK (PART 1)**
/MARIO BARTH

If Mario Barth's name isn't one of the first to drip off your tongue when bandying around the greatest in the world right now, you're mixing in the wrong circles. Part two continues next issue.

- 52 **BACK IN THE NEW YORK**
GROOVE/SETH WOOD

Seth Wood is one of the very few who have so far pretty much resisted the lure of technology to fuel his reputation online - much preferring to (gasp) show people his portfolio and (gasp again) talk to people! We were sold from the moment we saw the horse...

- 62 **LIKE A ROLLING STONE**
/VICTOR POLICHERI

Continuing our (unintentional) rock n roll theme this issue, we caught up with Victor Policheri - the man who loves the road more than his home but still finds the time to continually knock them out of the ball park with his work...

- 68 **TRAIN KEPT A ROLLIN'**
/JUSTIN DAVIES-TRAIN

Not even 23 and already making a name for himself, Justin "Burnout" Davies-Train proves that talent always has a sure-fire way of rising to the top.

SPECIAL FEATURES

- 58 **SOMETHING WICKED THIS**
WAY COMES

It's funny the sort of stuff you can come across while doing other things. One minute you're happily chatting away to tattooist Papa Joe, the next, you discover he's the most incredible sign maker...



CONTRIBUTORS

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FLASH!

Everybody loves a bit of Flash! Inspiring and innovative - we feature some of the best we've come across in the last few months.

FREE SUPPLEMENT



FALLOUT

Seen an interesting clipping in the press? Got something that you'd like reviewed or featured? Got some spare chocolate or beer? Send them to: Skin Deep, The Old School, Higher Kinnerton, Chester CH4 9AJ OR EMAIL: editor@skindeep.co.uk

LA INK SEASON 4 DVD GIVEAWAY!

That's right - it's another quality giveaway for you. We have five copies of season four of LA Ink to ship out to fans of the show.

A popular way of getting you all to take part these days appears to be to make it as simple as possible, thus, if you want to be in with a shot at the goodies, all you have to do is send an email to editor@skindeep.co.uk with the subject line LA INK - and don't forget to drop your name and address in the body of the email (you'd be surprised!). Good luck!



BRANDING GONE MAD...

Here's one for our overseas readers - or anyone with a penchant for Ecko gear and thinking of taking a holiday this year - Ecko Unlimited, purveyors of t-shirts, denim, track jackets, polos, etc; best-known for its ad campaigns featuring Lindsay Lohan and Vanessa Hudgens, is offering a 20 percent discount off its wares for life to anyone who gets a tattoo of the label's rhino or shears logo.

God forbid any of you should actually take up the gauntlet, but just in case you do, you know where we are if you've got your camera handy. Apologies for the cumbersome link: shopecko.com/family/index.jsp?categoryId=11330790 - but if you're that eager for a discount, we don't think you'll mind typing it in.



Ave Satanas®

WELCOME TO THE DARK SIDE

For those of you swinging towards the dark side, check out the new designs from Ave Satanas. Ave Satanas is a premier quality, heavy duty, hell based satanic clothing company. Their philosophy is grounded in thinking differently, embracing freedom, creativity and rebellion against organizations that attempt to constrain spiritually, intellectually and physically.

You can check out the early incarnations of Ave Satanas at www.ave-satanas.com. Here you will find their first official line of clothing. Their Pure Rebel Hellwear includes heavy duty hoodies, badass beanies and a variety of products designed to make the ultimate satanic statement. As Ave Satanas continues to evolve, so too will their range of satanic offerings so keep checking back!

Ave Satanas are currently running a design competition open to purveyors of the dark arts interested in designing something unique. The closing date for submissions is 31st August 2011 for a limited edition release at Halloween. The chosen one will be credited on their website, linked in to the Gateways page and a percentage of the sales will go to a charity of choice. For details on how to be a part of Ave Satanas first design competition visit Creations on their website.

This year Ave Satanas will also be at various events around the country, to find out more, visit the Blog page for upcoming events.

MOVERS AND SHAKERS

Tattoo Medway (Gillingham) welcomes 2 new artists; Wolf, ex Angelic Hell, and Alex Silver, ex Love Ink Tattoo and Blessed Tattoo. Meanwhile, Medway Tattoo & Piercing Centre (Rochester) welcomes 2 new Artists; Veronica (Roni) ex Tattoo Medway, and Sebastian, ex 529 Tattoo in London, and Skin City Tattoo in Dublin. For more info, portfolio's etc go to www.medwaytattoos.com

Meantime, up in Bradford, you have another great new studio to check out: Distinction, Blackshaw Mills, Halifax Road, Bradford, BD6 2HL Tel: 0751 517 5902 Email: distinctiontattoo@gmail.com Temporary Web site = [facebook/Daniel Distinction Artists](https://www.facebook.com/DanielDistinctionArtists) - Sy Greenwood & Dan Hartley They are now taking bookings for the shop opening in May. Custom and flash work undertaken but specialty is in new school and free hand Japanese.



TRY SOMETHING NEW IN BED!

Sin in Linen invites consumers to try something new in bed at their website www.SinInLinen.com.

This season brings two new prints into the mix of playful Sin in Linen designs - Raven's Dream and Big Top Stripes. Both prints are inspired by turn of the century vaudeville, traveling circus and burlesque. "We're tipping our hat to an era and tradition that encouraged a spectacle, embraced the curious, the deviant, and celebrated beauty, charisma, style and wit." says Sandy Glaze at Sin in Linen.

The print titled Raven's Dream is sultry and sweet. A pinup girl illustration from renowned pinup artist Krysztof Nemeth of Charm School Design is incorporated into the print's design. Big Top Stripes is a bold black and white wide-striped pattern that you'd expect to see at the circus.

Raven's Dream and Big Top Stripes are available on linens for the Bedroom, Bathroom and Kitchen. The entire collection can be found at SinInLinen.com

MOVERS AND SHAKERS

Dave Buddha finally has his own studio. ALL STYLE TATTOOS @ Barrow in Furness, Cumbria. Doors opened a couple of months ago - Dave would also like to thank everyone @ STUDIO 81 - it was emotional!

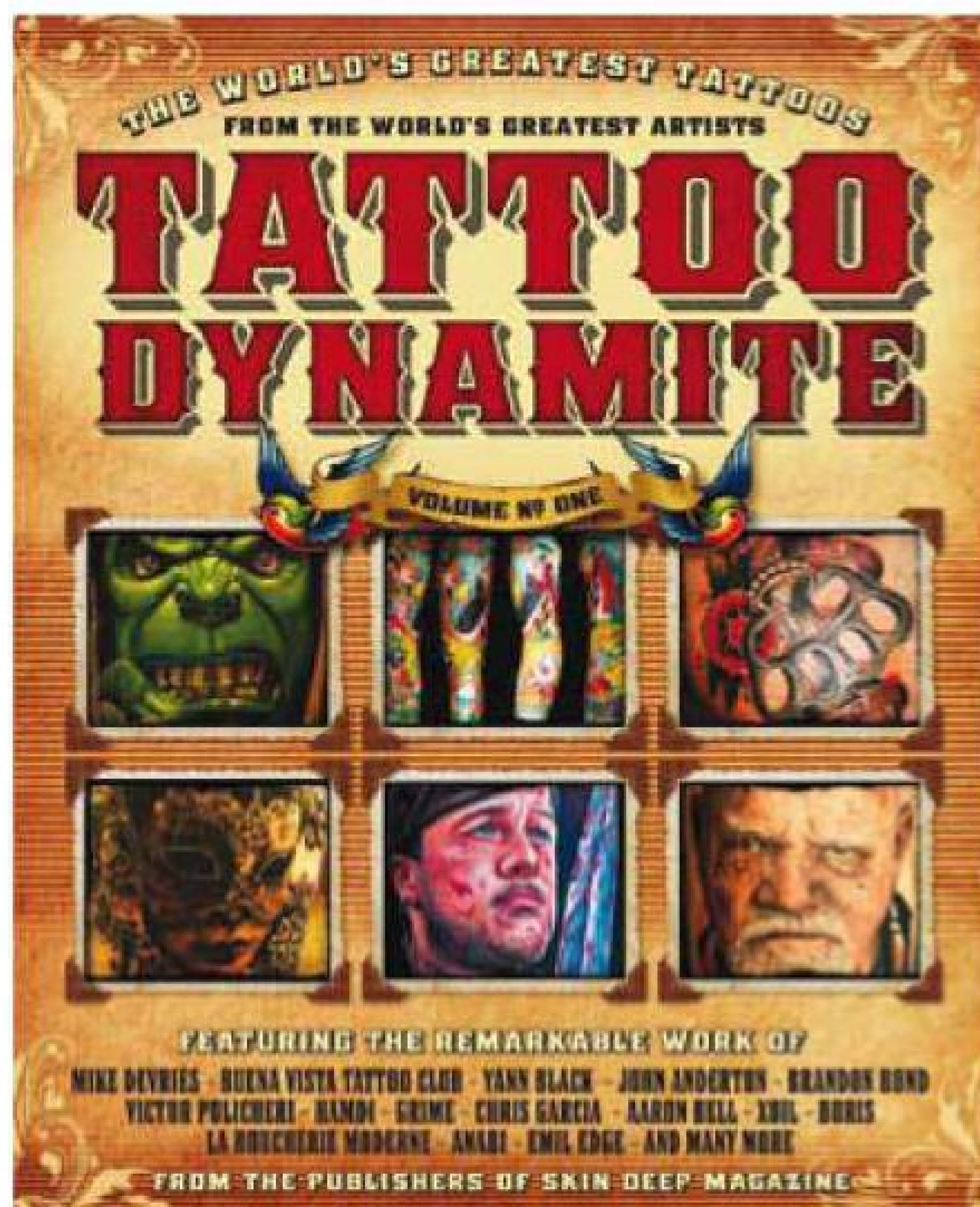
Indigo Tattoo in Northwich will soon be changing their name to Powerhouse Tattoo. Due to other studios having the Indigo name, we decided to go for a relaunch under a new name. Hopefully the website will be live soon and there will be new advert designs also. The whole changeover should be completed this month. Check out the new site at: www.powerhousetattoo.co.uk

Art and Soul Tatu in Port Talbot have just opened a bespoke tattoo art and piercing studio featuring custom work by Becky Lowe and Taylor Williams. Visit www.artandsoultatu.co.uk for more information.

BOOM! TATTOO DYNAMITE IS UPON US.

By the time you read this, the Tattoo Dynamite bookazine will be on a newsagents shelf near you! It doesn't seem like five minutes ago we were asking for contributions but here we are - in fact it arrived back in the office about a half hour ago so I haven't actually seen it yet - but the word on the street is a thumbs up, which is good enough for me! If you pick one up, let us know what you think.

Meanwhile, the Tattoo Vixens competition is still open at bigtattooplanet.com/vixens but there's only a month or so left now. You know what to do!



MO COPPOLETTA EXHIBITS HIS NEW 'HARE' STYLE FOR CHARITY

Legendary tattoo artist, Mo Coppoletta, has joined celebrities from the worlds of art, fashion, sport and entertainment in cutting, colouring and styling their 'HARE' to raise funds the world famous Great Ormond Street Hospital for Children.

The Hare Styling charity fund-raising exhibition opens to the public at Heartbreak in London from Saturday 16th April and runs until Sunday 8th May, with a celebrity launch event on the evening of Thursday 14th April.

Entitled 'Rose of No Man's Land', Mo Coppoletta's mixed media piece will go on display alongside over 150 artworks especially created for this unique event by celebrities and patrons of the Great Ormond Street Hospital, including: Helena Bonham Carter, Thandie Newton, Alastair Campbell, Jamie Oliver, Cheryl Cole, Sir Alex Ferguson, Jack Vettriano, Stella McCartney and Ronnie Wood.

The artworks will be auctioned on-line and at a live auction at the Hare Ball at the Dorchester on 26th May 2011. Bidding on-line opens on 14th April via www.givinglots.co.uk, the on-line charity auction site.

Check it out: Hare Styling at Heartbreak: 16th April - 8th May 2011 (Open: Mon-Sat 10-6 & 11-4 Sun)

Heartbreak, 17 Bulstrode Street, London W1U 2JH
Tel: 0203 219 5170 www.heart-break.co.uk

The brain child of celebrity hair dresser, Michael Van Clarke, the Hare Styling initiative is the latest in a number of fund-raising projects undertaken as part of, HAIRraising, an ongoing appeal launched by John Frieda in 2010 to raise funds for Great Ormond Street Hospital and supported by the top names in the hairdressing community.

BOURNEMOUTH GIVEAWAY

The Bournemouth Tattoo Convention is fast approaching - and to make a change from the regular show promos, they've created a neat video trailer for it. You can check it out here: vimeo.com/21458549. We've also come up with a nice little competition for you. We've got two sets of two tickets to giveaway for the show - all you have to do is tell us what county Bournemouth is in. Drop your answer in the subject line of an email and mail it to editor@skindeep.co.uk - snip!



CONVENTIONS

All details correct at time of going to press.

APRIL 15TH - 17TH, 2011

19TH INTERNATIONAL TATTOO-CONVENTION

Frankfurt, Germany
Frankfurt Fairground
Theodor-Heuss-Allee 3
Frankfurt 60327
www.convention-frankfurt.de/
Info +49 (0)6043 - 3317

APRIL 16 - 17

TATTOO EXTRAVANZA

South Parade Pier, Portsmouth
www.tattooextravaganza.co.uk

APRIL 16 - 17

NORTH LAKES TATTOO CONVENTION

Shepherds Inn & Auctioneer,
Carlisle, Cumbria
www.northlakestattooshow.com

APRIL 30 - MAY 1

TITANIC INK

St Mary's Football Ground,
Southampton, Hampshire, England
www.titanic-ink.co.uk

MAY 1 - 2

NEWPORT TATTOO CONVENTION

Neport City leisure centre
www.newporttattooconvention.co.uk
info@newporttattooconvention.co.uk
ticket office 01633 656757

MAY 13 - 15

LIVERPOOL TATTOO CONVENTION

The Adelphi Hotel, Liverpool, England
www.tattooconvention.co.uk

MAY 14 - 15

PLYMOUTH TATTOO CONVENTION

Plymouth GuildHall, Plymouth,
Devon, England
info@plymouthtattooconvention.co.uk
01752 253418

MAY 21 - 22

ALCHEMY TATTOO EXPO

Salle Polyvalente, Conthey, Switzerland
www.alchemy-tattoo-expo.ch

MAY 21 - 22

12TH INTERNATIONAL NEEDLE ART CONVENTION

Bress Sportcenter
Breda - The Netherlands

MAY 22

SOMERSET TATTOO CONVENTION

Bridgwater Sports & Social Club, Bath
Road, Bridgwater, Somerset, TA6 4LP
www.myspace.com/somersetattooconvention

MAY 28 - 29

BOURNEMOUTH INK 2011

Bournemouth International Centre,
Exeter Road, Bournemouth,
Dorset, England
www.bournemouthtattooconvention.com
ester@bournemouthink.com

MAY 29 - 30

GILLINGHAM TATTOO CONVENTION

King Charles Hotel, Gillingham,
Kent, England
Tel: Paul Lashley on 07762 402809
or 01634 254647. Darren Stares on
02392 851661

UNPLUG THE JUKEBOX...

IT'S NOT EVERYDAY THAT YOU'RE MADE AN OFFER YOU CAN'T REFUSE.



Over in High Wycombe, Woody's Tattoo Studio has found itself a new home right in the middle of the high street - and it's a peach. It comes

with all the normal paraphernalia you'd expect from the Woody: motorbikes inside, being graced with your birth chart (whether you asked for it or not) and regular customers with sprawling sleeves and backpieces. You get the picture...

It's a beautiful studio that's for sure - it's a good thing I got to see it all in the daylight because some few hours later, my attention would have been somewhat diverted by Adam Ant showing up to play a totally off the radar gig for the forty or so people that had gathered here to check out the joint.

I'll write it again just so as you know it's not a mistake.

Adam Ant. Yeah - that Adam Ant.

While it may not mean a whole lot to those of you under 35, you will at least have heard of the legend. For those of you who breathe the same air as me, you can imagine this was a pretty big deal. Not for any fanboy reason, but simply because it was so unprecedented and cool. Woody sure knows how to throw a party - and shame on the local press for thinking it was an elaborate April Fools Day gag. Mind you, I think there were a few moments there when Woody himself wasn't quite sure either...

Being 'old' has distinct advantages sometimes and none more so than being old enough to remember the Dirk Wears White Sox album from which he (Adam not Woody) pulled the majority of his material this evening.

To be honest, we were all more than happy to be along for the ride. I think I would have been disappointed if he'd pulled Kings, Stand, Charming et al out of the bag. The reality of the situation is that Ant is well aware of his heritage, where he came from and his current standing - by pulling the likes of Cleopatra and Cartrouble out of the hat,



Adam Ant. Yeah - that Adam Ant. While it may not mean a whole lot to those of you under 35, you will at least have heard of the legend. For those of you who breathe the same air as me, you can imagine this was a pretty big deal.

he also gave the crowd the respect that they deserved. A nice touch which was matched by respect in return.

Upshot? This was punk rock n roll as it was always meant to be and hasn't been performed quite like this since... well, since Adam was kicking about at the Marquee back in the day.

Post show, a combination of studio regulars and some of us 'networking' types got together for a few drinks as Woody, Sharron, Jammes and Co did what they were supposed to be doing.

It's not normal for a tattoo studio to double as an impromptu gig venue for one of the nations rock icons, not normal for it to be successful either, but then Woody's Tattoo Studio isn't your normal type of studio.

If anybody is interested in viewing the songs from the show, I took the liberty of filming all of it for prosperity and you can find it loaded up to me personal youtube channel here: www.youtube.com/user/zodiacchungvideo
Sion Smith

Woody's Tattoo Studio
28 High Street, High
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www.originalskin.ie/festival

JUNE 11 - 12

TATTOOFEST 2011Chemobudowa, Krakow, Poland
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JUNE 12

READING TATTOO SHOWRivermead Leisure Complex, Richfield Avenue, Reading, Berkshire, RG1 8EQ
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INK FOR HEROESCatterick Leisure centre, Gough Road, Catterick Garrison, North Yorkshire
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inkforheroes@hotmail.co.uk
t: 07796 936 355

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12TH ANNUAL PORTSMOUTH CONVENTIONPortsmouth Guildhall
www.portsmouthtattooconvention.com

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MK TATTOO CONVENTIONMK Dons Football Stadium, Milton Keynes, England
info@mktattooconvention.co.uk
www.mktattooconvention.co.uk

JUNE 24 - 26

TATTOOLAPALOOZAHyatt Regency, Miami, Florida, USA
www.tattoolapalooza.com

JULY 16 - 17

STATE OF THE ART TATTOOBody Art & Music Festival
The Assembly Rooms, Derby, England
www.tattoo-2001.com

AUGUST 5-7

TATTOO JAMDoncaster Racecourse
www.tattoojam.com

AUGUST 12 - 14

SEATTLE TATTOO EXPOSeattle Center Northwest Rooms, Seattle, WA 98105, USA
www.seattletattooexpo.com
info@seattletattooexpo.com

AUGUST 12TH - 14TH, 2011

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AUGUST 13 - 14

NORWICH BODY ART FESTIVALSt Andrews Hall, Norwich, Norfolk,
www.norwichbodyartfestival.co.uk

10/11TH SEPTEMBER

COVENTRY INK TATTOO CONVENTIONAT7 Centre, Bell green, Coventry
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SMALLMAN SYNDROME

One man's tragic obsession with the sillier side of tattooing...

HELLO there lovers of all things tattooed. This week I bring you a tale of my own stupidity rather than that of others.

You see, like most stand-up comedians I will be sashaying my way up to Edinburgh in August to perform at the fringe festival. With me looking the way I do (odd and tattooed) it seemed only right that I would write a show about being, well, odd and tattooed. I decided to call it "Tattooligan" and then started dreaming up a variety of daft gimmicks for it.

The most obvious gimmick was to have the show title tattooed on me somewhere. I discussed this with friends, who thought it was frivolous. I discussed it with family, who rolled their eyes in the usual way (they're now used to me making perfectly ridiculous life choices). And finally I discussed it with my agent, who thought it sounded like a perfectly excellent way to sell tickets.

The plan was this: I would get it tattooed on me, film it, put the video on YouTube and it would generate a buzz around my show before the festival had even begun. Perfect.

Skip back to last month: Remember that I asked what the most painful place to get tattooed was? That small point will become painfully (pun intended) relevant in a couple of minutes.

Anyway, I popped in to see my friends Martin and Shay in Kasbah in Leicester. We discussed the font, the size and where it would go. I decided upon my stomach, as it's one of very few places that I don't have inked and I'm quite proud of having lost a bit of weight this year. I came back a couple of days later with my friend David (who was filming the experience), as excited as usual about being tattooed.

Crucially, I was greeted by Shay who

(and bear in mind this is an artist who has pretty much his entire body tattooed) warned me that this was going to hurt. Whilst laughing. I thought to myself "Ha, I had my elbow done last week. How bad can this be?"

The answer, my friends, is about as bad a 45 minutes that I've

I am now the proud owner of a stomach tattoo, expertly applied by Martin. And as luck would have it, a lot of footage of me being in utter agony.

experienced in my life. I would have been concerned about my so-called friends guffawing at my plight if I could actually concentrate on anything other than the ridiculous pain that I was going through. Why did nobody warn me about this? More to the point, why did I not pay any attention when people CLEARLY did warn me about this?

Well, I am now the proud owner of a stomach tattoo, expertly applied by Martin. And as luck would have it, a lot of footage of me being in utter agony that – whilst making me cringe to watch it back – will probably sell the stupidity of me and my show marvellously.

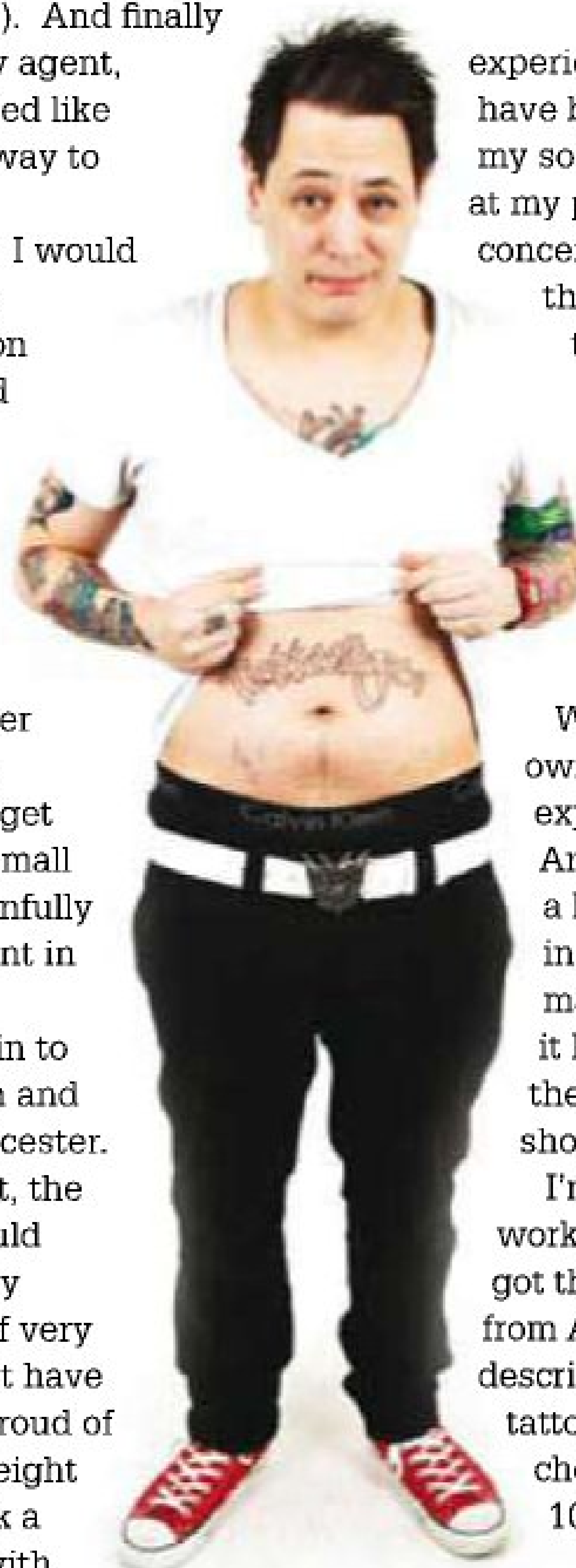
I'm having some more work on my chest soon, and I got the following in my inbox from Alan Robson in Gateshead describing his most painful tattoo: "Both sides of my chest were about 50 out of 10 on the pain scale."

I'll never learn, will I?

Don't forget to send me

your pictures and stories about the dafter side of tattooing.

See you next month...



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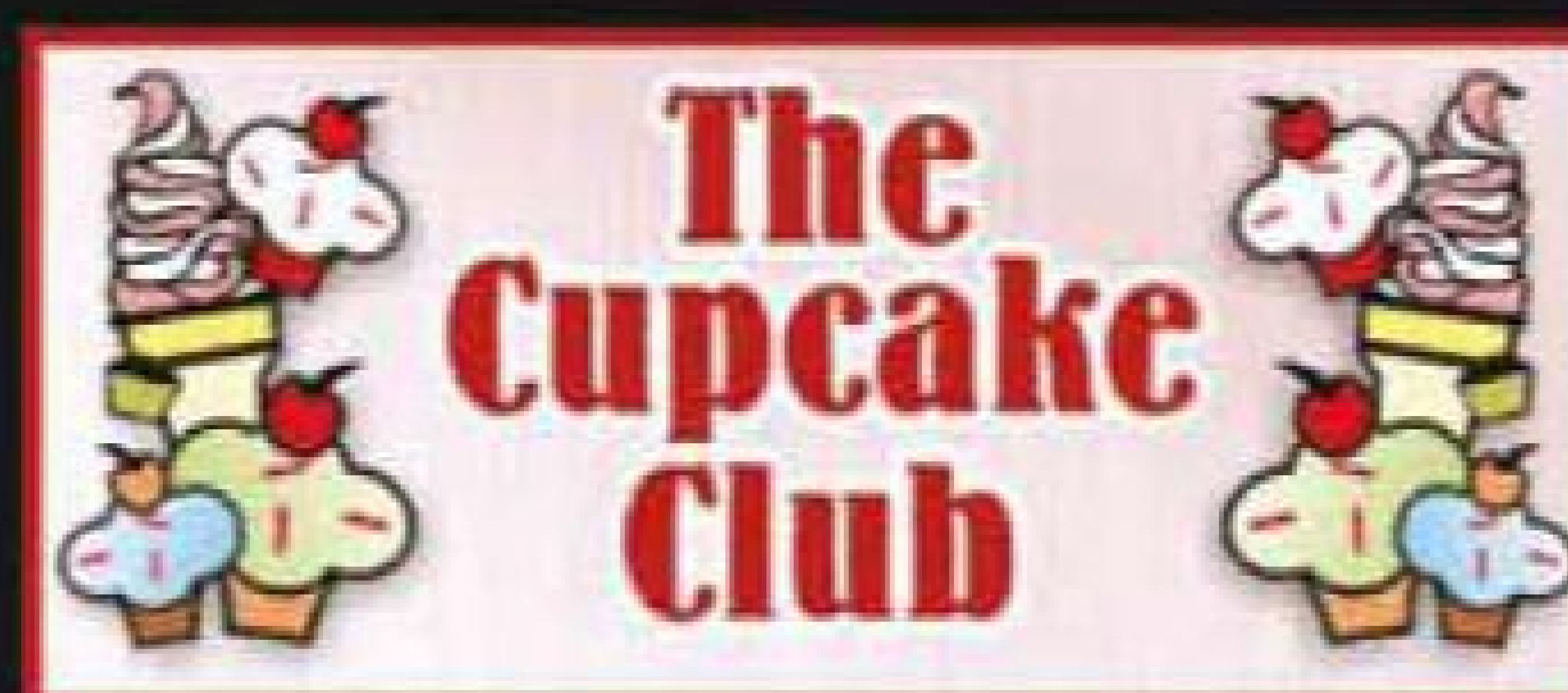
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WORDS/IMAGES CRAIGY LEE

PICNIC AT HANGING ROCK



Cream tea at Hanging Rock

Well we have been in Melbourne for six weeks and the weather has become rather familiar, wet and cold! So we are heading up to Sydney with a few stop offs and even have time to pay homage to an Australian legend...

As we leave a rainy Melbourne behind our first stop is Hanging Rock, the location that shares its name with this article. A slight detour from Melbourne, Hanging Rock is situated in a national park an hour north of the city, it's an eerie place alright and the fact that it's hazy and raining does nothing but add to the strange feeling and atmosphere when scaling the rocks and navigating the holes. The story (and film) say that a group of school girls went missing here in the early 1900's, and whatever the truth is, it's certainly not a place I want to hang around in for too long, so there was no time for

a picnic but we did stop in the café for cream tea! (That's close enough! Ed.)

Escaping the humidity we drive a further few hours to our next stop Shepparton, which amazingly is very warm and sunny - a world away from Melbourne. Shepparton is a small town between Melbourne and Sydney where I am doing a short guest spot at High St Tattoo. The town has a population

of just 28,000 and there are five tattoo shops, so it's pretty clear the people here love their tattoos! These smaller towns are always fun to visit as you get a much better sense of the country you're visiting. Apparently I am the first international guest artist to ever work in town and artists from the other studios pop by to say hello as well as the local newspaper.



High Street Tattoo

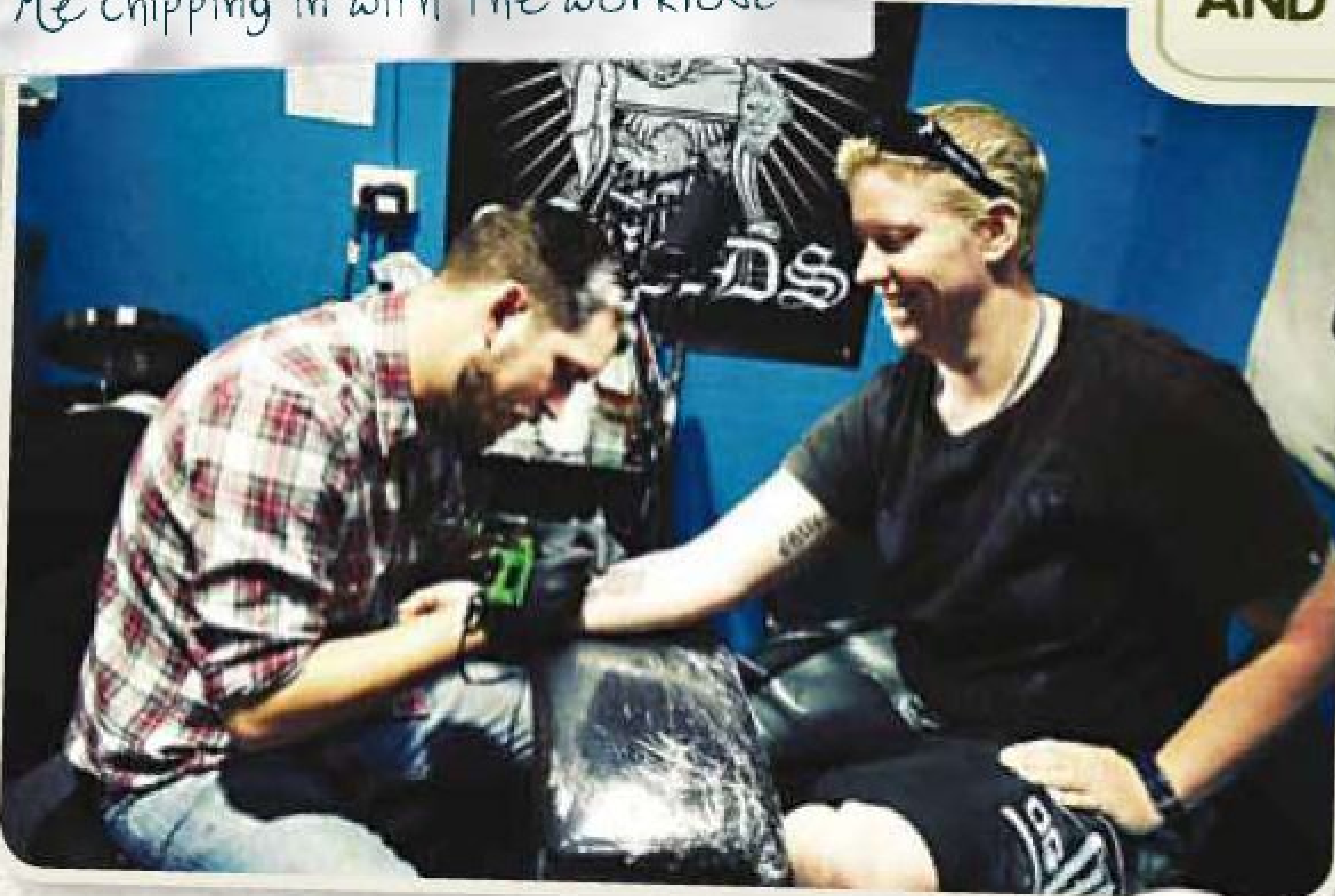
Ned by Jaclyn Rehe



Ned by Kel Violet.

WITH A LARGE PERCENTAGE OF THE CLIENTELE BEING FEMALE, TAKING THE TATTOO SHOP FROM THE BACK STREETS RIGHT ONTO THE HIGH STREET - ALTHOUGH NOT REVOLUTIONARY - HAS CHANGED PERCEPTIONS IN THIS TOWN FOR THE BETTER AND LONG MAY THEIR SUCCESS CONTINUE.

Me chipping in with the workload



High St Tattoo is a family run business that has been open for a little over a year although Dean and Brian have been piercing in this spot for over twenty years. We arrive at 10am and the shop is already busy with customers browsing the flash racks and preparing for their appointments. After a few days I think it's safe to say that this is the busiest shop I have worked in so far. They have three resident artists Tim, Mick and Kye, as well as apprentice Barry to get through the heavy workload.

The studio is bright, clean, modern and with smiley Narelle behind the counter, very welcoming! The studio has booths similar to other shops we have visited in Australia and each has a window so the whole place feels very open yet there is privacy for customers when required with pull down blinds. It's a great environment for artists and customers with plenty of home

comforts and it doesn't matter if it's a Chinese symbol or a backpiece, they will make sure you're happy before it goes on to your skin. "We're not interested in ego or attitudes, this is a customer led business and we try to cater for that" owner Dean tells me. "We're trying to move away from the biker run intimidating shops of old and are catering for the mainstream." Indeed they seem to be hitting the mark, the sheer open-ness of the shop means there is nothing to be hidden, everyone can see how clean and sterile an environment it truly is. With a large percentage of the clientele being female, taking the tattoo shop from the back streets right onto the high street - although not revolutionary, - has changed perceptions in this town for the better and long may their success continue.

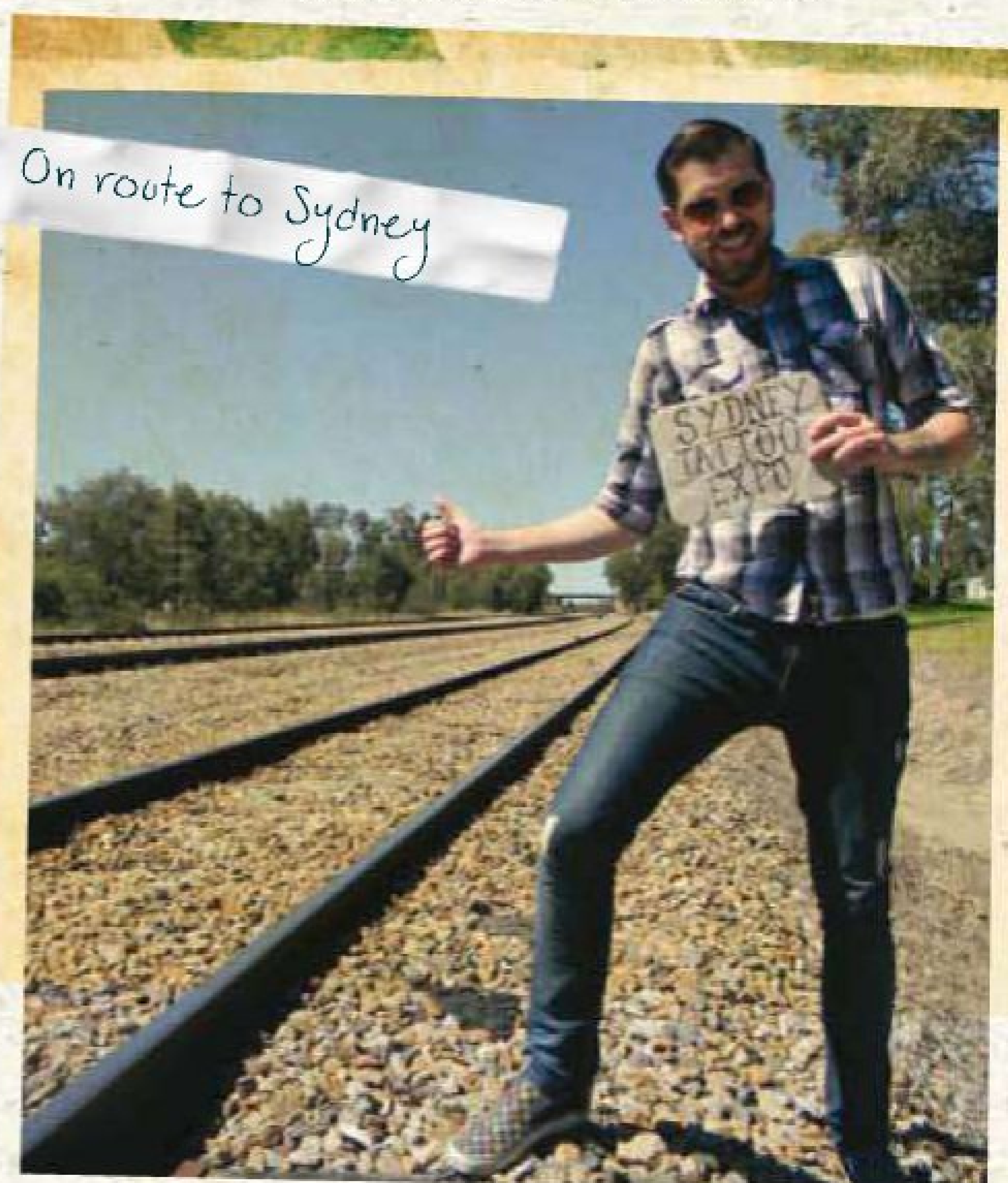
Dean and Narelle were so determined



that we left happy, they cooked us a barbeque and took us to an Ozzie rules footy match with plenty of grog before we left. It's a shame I couldn't work longer at High St Tattoo as everyone was very friendly and made India and I feel very welcome but we have a schedule to keep to and need to arrive in Sydney for the Tattoo expo next week!

On the way through to Sydney we make one last stop at the town of

On route to Sydney



PICNIC AT HANGING ROCK

PART FIVE

Hanging Rock

AS I LOOKED THROUGH THE VARIOUS BACK ISSUES IN THE STUDIOS BETWEEN APPOINTMENTS, I KEPT SEEING PORTRAITS OF A BEARDED MAN OR THE QUOTE "SUCH IS LIFE" AND A COWBOY WEARING A METAL HELMET AND CHEST PLATE.

Glenrowan, which is of historical significance as it was where peoples hero and rebel Ned Kelly made his last stand. He is now more famous in death than in his own lifetime. I didn't actually know who Ned Kelly was until I arrived in Australia and opened a tattoo magazine. As I looked through the various back issues in the studios between appointments, I kept seeing portraits of a bearded man or the quote "Such Is Life" and a cowboy wearing a metal helmet and chest plate. This man of course was Ned Kelly - an outlaw of the late 1800's who rebelled against the corrupt police in the state of Victoria and was infamous for wearing his homemade bulletproof armour to avoid injury. The most tattooed images in Australia are probably the Southern Cross (yes, I have



Road sign



Street sign



Ned by Marv Larning



Ned by Mez @ True love tattoo

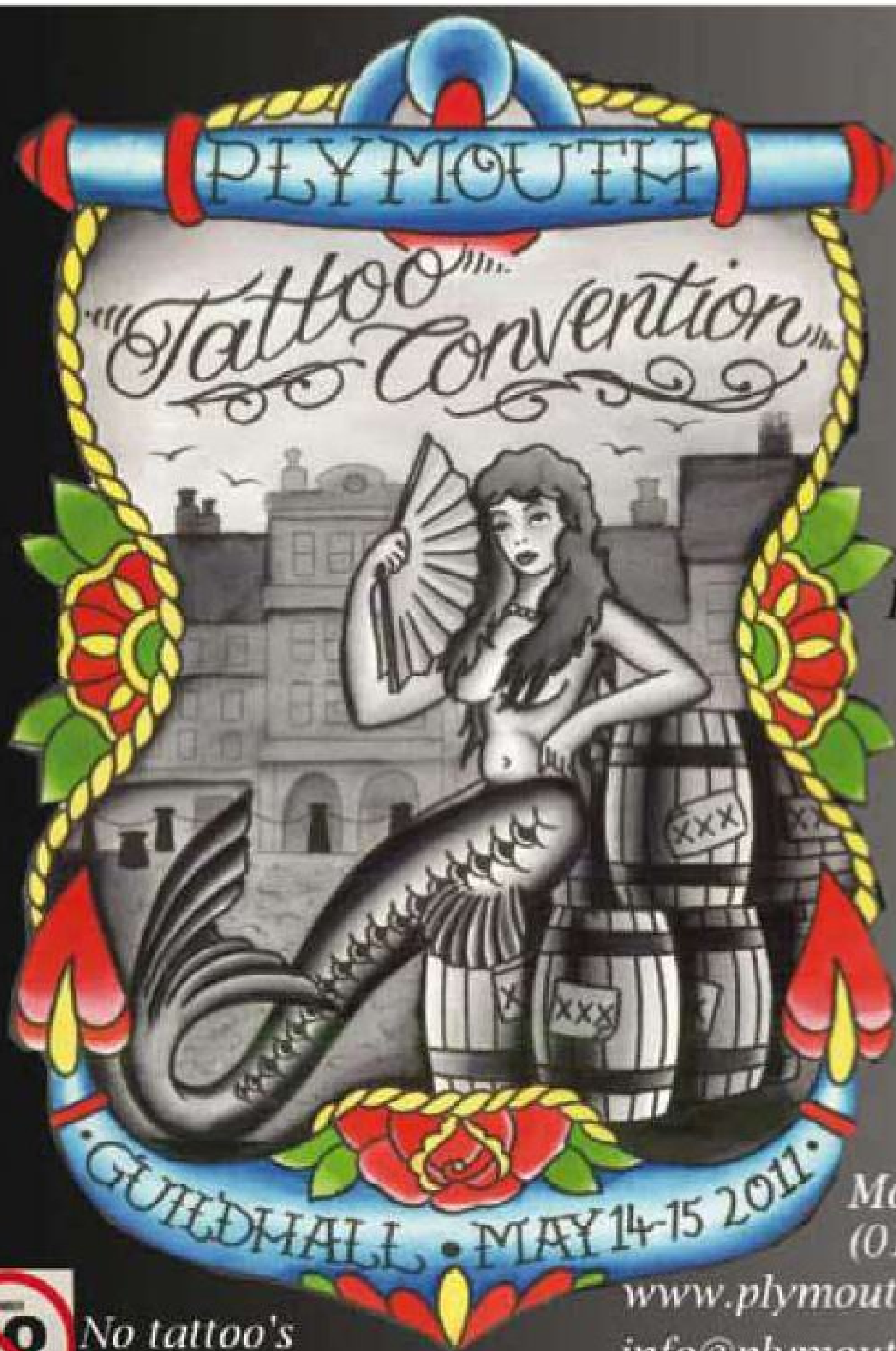


Sam Ruiz at Green Lotus

done my share) and Ned Kelly related designs.

As we drive through Glenrowan, it's a bit of a let down to find that none of the historical buildings are still standing today. The small town looks like the set of a western and is littered with statues of their favourite bushranger. Australians are pretty patriotic people and have turned the Ned Kelly legend into their own Robin Hood or Che

Guevara. I guess what people really like about him is he stood for the people and anti-establishment imagery has always been a popular choice for a tattoo. It is a symbol which shows their inner rebel permanently on their skin regardless of suit, uniform or corporate company - whether it's a portrait, quote or armour wearing gunslinger, a Ned Kelly tattoo is exactly that, a symbol of rebellion for the Australian nation.



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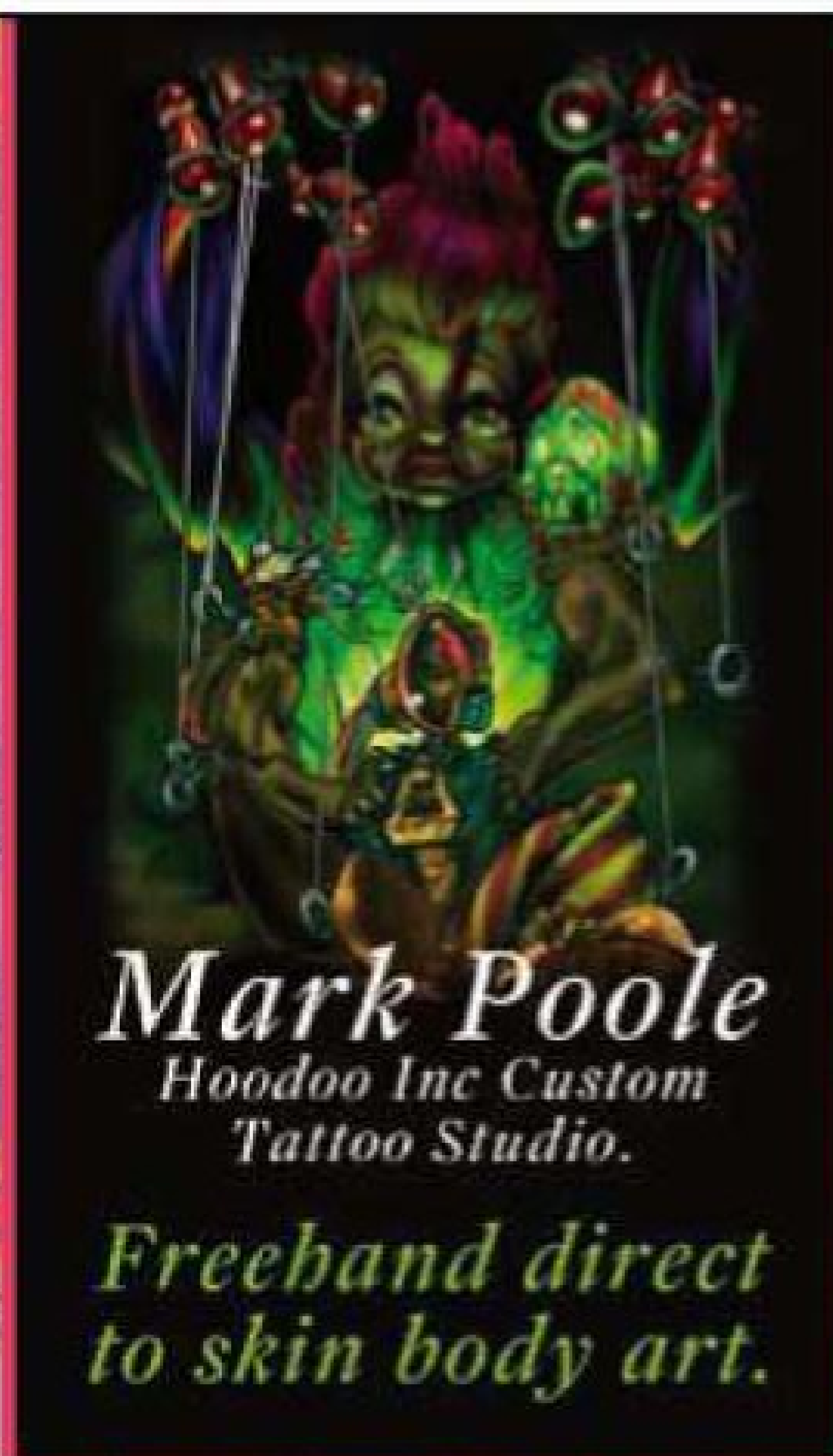
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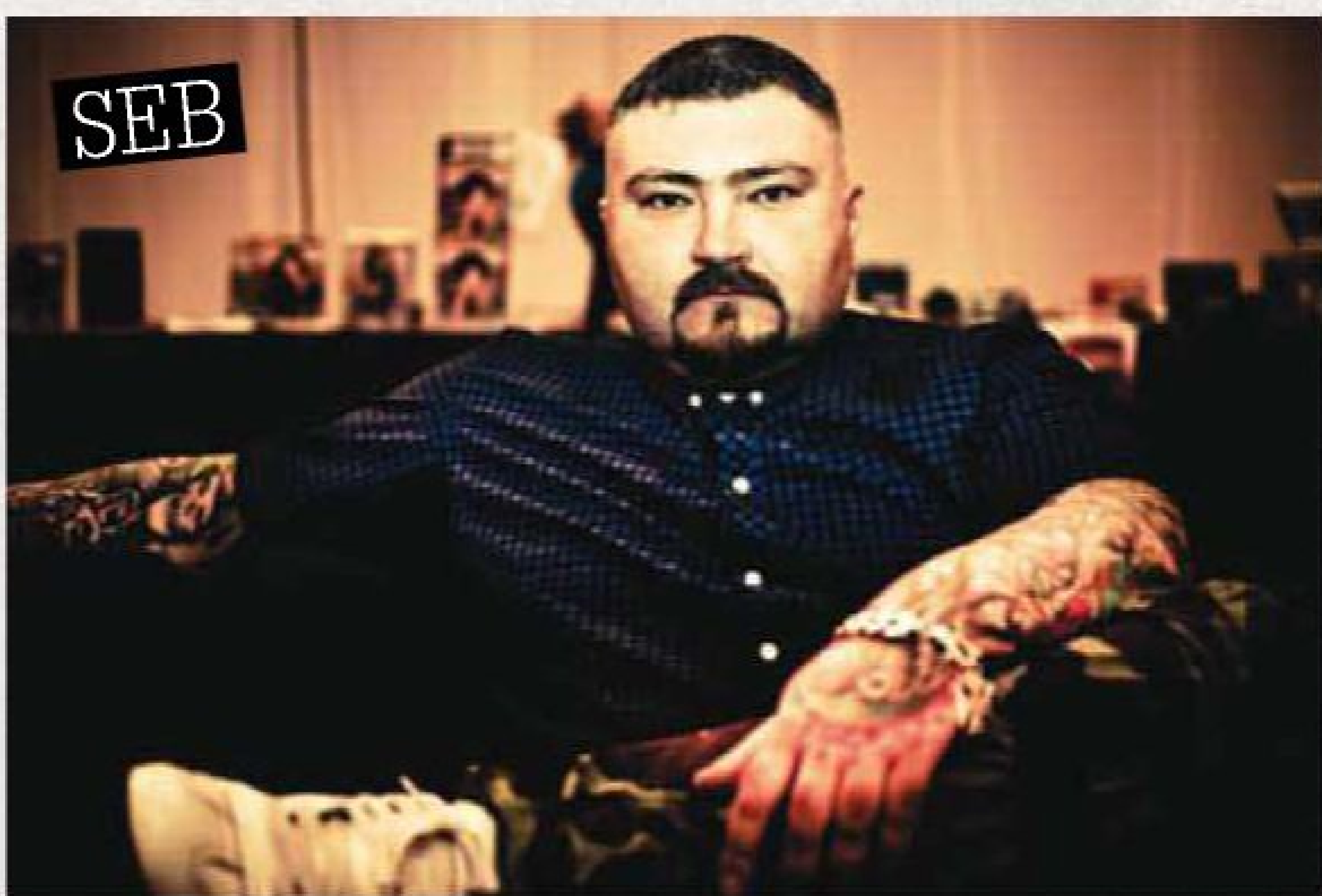
It's quite a long story."

Yeah, sure. This is how Sebastian 'Seb' Flaszka, begins, but it's more

like being strapped to a torpedo than an interview. I'll let him run free in the field before I put the lead on:

"I used to play in a band in Poland called Frontside, it was quite a famous band. In 2003, we even won the equivalent of a Grammy in Poland, in the Best Heavy Metal Album category. At the time, I had some big dreams for the band, you know, to earn enough cash to live from the music but I soon found that it was impossible. In the end,

SEB



SEB ON
ADRIAN 'GRU-CHAN'
GRUSZCZYNSKI



Adrian 'Gru-Chan' Gruszczynski is 21 and the youngest artist in the family. He has been in the tattoo game for only two years and is already making a big name for himself. I followed Adrian's work for over a year on a polish social network site, noticing what a huge progression of quality, home made talent was there. Every tattoo picture he posted, was better than the one before, so I decided to invite him to our brand new Aberdeen branch as a resident artist. So far, all the knowledge that young gentleman knows about tattooing, has been collected by himself from the internet and from other good polish tattooists - and only by email. Now he has spent a few visits, and few hundred pounds, on the tattoo convention circuit being tattooed by KOSA and DEAD which gave him another level of knowledge altogether. He is a celebrity in our Aberdeen branch, much loved by all the girls age 18-66. Adrian is a new school, cartoon style guy with a little hint of realism. He has a passion for gymnastics and martial arts. His nickname, Gru-Chan, is from his movie hero Jackie Chan."

I decided to split up with the guys and take my chances in Scotland. When I came over, I found myself working in Edinburgh, in the scrap yards and the factories. I did this for a very long time, about two or three years. During this time, I was checking out the tattoo studios that were around and to be honest, I wasn't too impressed with what I saw; everything, from the approach to the customer to the artwork, the same designs on the walls all the time. And the prices too - everything seemed a little overcharged. I'll give you an example; once I was walking down a street in Edinburgh, a very busy street. I saw a tattoo studio and they had their open doors so you could see the customers getting tattooed and all the dust and shit from the street was blowing inside. I was thinking, this is mad, why can't I do it - and do it better!"

I admire Seb's style. His ability to see something that could be taken, reworked and made better for everyone. It's all ashes of inspiration like this that drive us forward but what does an ex-musician and factory worker really know about setting up a tattoo studio, let alone running one? "Having been a musician for about 20





After some very bad experiences in different tattoo studios in Wroclaw, Poland, Mr. Greg decided he wanted to work for a crew where the owners were tattoo lovers and not just money makers. So in January 2010, he moved to Scotland and join the family permanently. After just a few months in the studio,

SEB ON GRZEGORZ MR. GREG' KLICH



Mr. Greg did his first convention at North Lakes Tattoo Show, Carlisle, and won Rock'n'Roll's first award in 'The Best Sleeve Of The Show' category. It was Mr. Greg's second award in his career. Previously he had won second place for 'The Best Tattoo of Sunday' at the 2008 Cottbus Tattoo Convention in Germany. Mr. Greg is very determined and very well organised as a tattoo artist, so all the preparations before the conventions are done by him and we never forget even the smallest screw from our equipment. The traditional style of tattooing will always be in his heart but new school and realistic are not a mystery to Mr. Greg. He is crazy about fishing as a hobby so Scotland seems to be a good place for Mr. Greg!

We knew what we were doing, how to run a proper tattoo studio. We were talking to customers for about two or three hours about their designs, we were preparing everything for free because it was all such fun you know.



twenty years, I knew nearly everything I needed to about tattoos because I had sponsorships and endorsements from tattoo shops in Poland. I still had some good contacts with tattoo studios, so I sent a message to a friend in Poland and I said to him, "What do you think about opening a tattoo studio in Edinburgh? Tomasz has been my friend for a long time so we knew each other very well. At the time, he was responsible for the piercing section at Dragon Tattoo Studio in Katowice. Tomasz is a guy with full head of ideas but he just can't sit in one place for too long, so after two years at Rock'n'Roll Tattoo he decided to open his own studio in Krakow - his studio is called Rock'n'Ink Tattoo. We are still close and co-operate all the time. In fact, one his resident artists, Mariusz Romanowicz, will be doing a guest spot at our studios from the 15th of April."

So with the idea in place and interest being shown, all Seb needed was the money to set about putting his plan into action. In true Seb fashion, this major obstacle becomes just another hurdle to be overcome. "I had no cash at all, so I was working in the factory, on nightshift, four nights a week and also 12 hours shifts Saturdays and Sundays, double time, just to save some money to open and run the studio."

And the hard work paid off. It wasn't long before Seb was out of the factory yards and into a newly opened studio in Edinburgh. "When we opened the first tattoo studio in Edinburgh, we had a big Polish community and they were our main customers in the beginning. Then what happened was because we are Polish, our language and accent was very easy to recognise by the Scottish people, so we started getting more customers. Because of the increasing number of customers, we decided to invite a few guest artists from the good and well known Polish tattoo studios, basically our friends. In those early days, we had Pawel from 3rd Eye Tattoo, Carlos from Blackstar Tattoo, Dominik from Tattoo Lucky, the guy called Tattooman and Adam Gorek who was on the road at this time. Not



many people know this but we also had Kazik Rychlikowski, better known as KOSA, guest spot with us. He started his international career at Rock'n'Roll Tattoo. So quickly, they saw that we were good artists and that our level of hygiene was very high. We knew what we were doing, how to run a proper tattoo studio. We were talking to customers for about two or three hours about their designs, we were preparing everything for free because it was all such fun you know. And people were really surprised. And we try to keep that feeling still now. I was speaking to a woman, about two days ago in the Glasgow studio, who said that she had never had that kind of service that we provide, at a studio before."

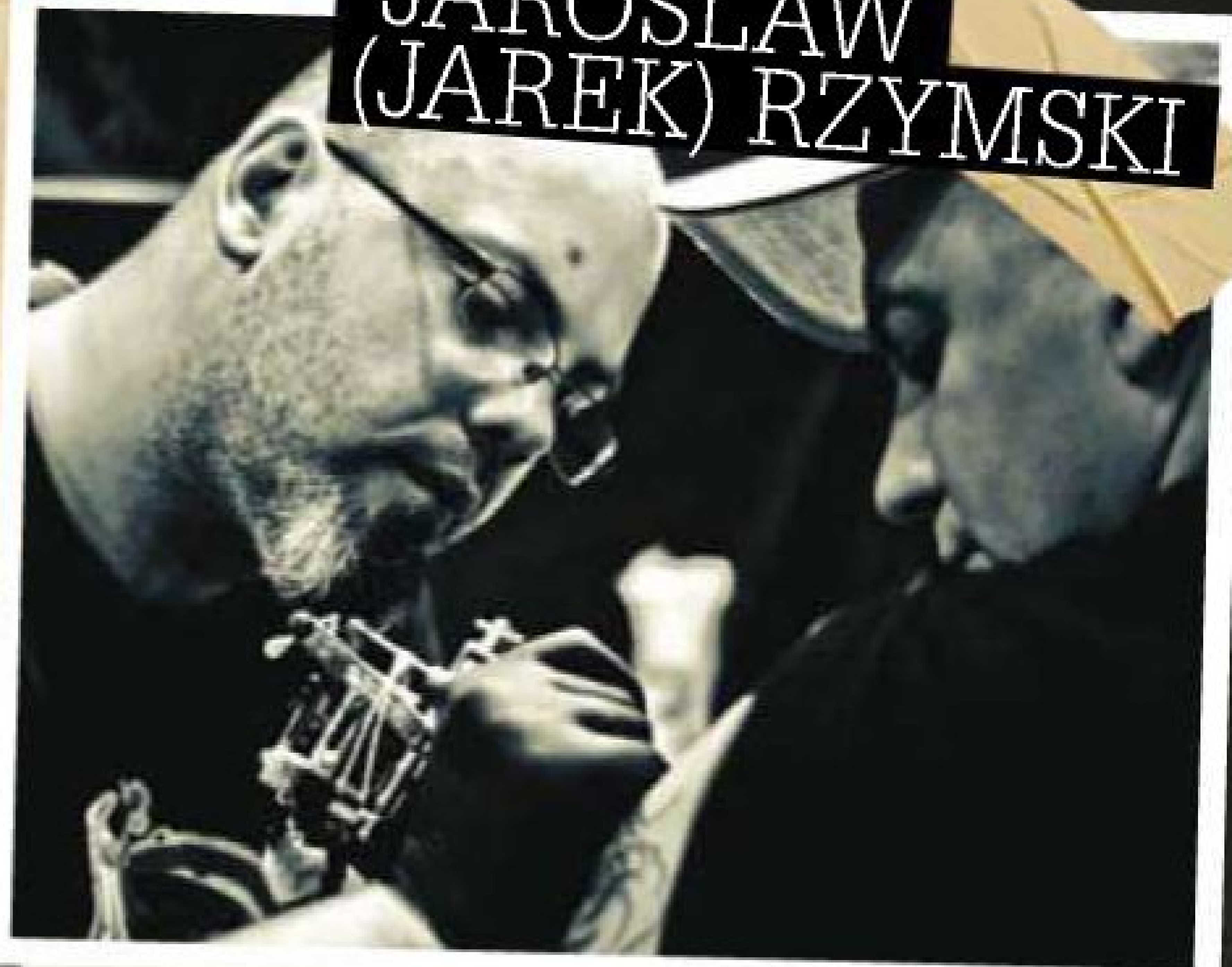
Not content with one successful studio, Seb turned his drive and passion onto another one, this time in Glasgow...and then another one in Aberdeen. "I received a phone call about a tattoo studio in Glasgow that was for sale. After few days of intensive thinking, I decided to check the place out. The studio was fully equipped and it was in a good location so I decided to take the challenge and open our second branch. Then another idea came into my head. A

tattoo studio in Aberdeen. We have a lot of customers travelling from Aberdeenshire so it seemed a good idea. While I was making up my mind, I spoke to my cousin Aga and her husband Stephen about it. They had just come back from Australia, where they had lived near Bondi Beach, and they told me that lots of people were very impressed with their tattoos. One of their dreams had always been to run their own tattoo studio, so I asked them if they would like to help run the new studio. And that is how another branch came to life."

"But I have had some funny things happen setting up the studios," Seb continues, "Once, I was having a chat with some one from Edinburgh Health & Safety and she never knew that something like single-use tubes existed. She was trying to tell me a couple of things about opening a tattoo studio that was absolute rubbish. Four years ago, they never knew that you had single tubes and all that they expected from me, was just to have an autoclave."

And when it came to opening the other studios, there were even more surprises in store for Seb: "The rules for opening a tattoo studio, for

SEB ON

JAROSLAW
(JAREK) RZYMSKI

Mr. Rzymiski, the quietest tattooist in our squad. It took me about six months to have a couple words with Jarek, before he realised the full potential of his artistic and sometimes very sarcastic humour. Not only is he based permanently at Edinburgh studio, he is also co-owner of Lucyfire Tattoo in Szczecin, Poland. In the past he has had some very bad experiences working in a 'studio' in Larnaka, Cyprus, where he had hundreds of drunk and drugged up people asking him for all sorts of weird tattoos, normally at about three in the morning! Feeling very disillusioned and upset, he decided to leave that hot Mediterranean island and come back to Poland. It was a few months after that, that he had an offer from another Scottish tattoo studio but because his friend Herr Kempke was already our crew member he choose Rock'n'Roll as his final destination. Because they are still running their studio in Poland, Mr. Rzymiski and Herr Kempke are currently working on a monthly basis but from July or August, Jarek will stay with us peranently. His favourite style is black & grey."

Once, I was having a chat with some one from Edinburgh Health & Safety and she never knew that something like single-use tubes existed. She was trying to tell me a couple of things about opening a tattoo studio that was absolute rubbish.



running that kind of business, should be the same in each city. But it's not! In Aberdeen, you have to pay for a licence for each artist, which is about £300 for 3 years. In Edinburgh, that is £52 for three years. In Glasgow, it is £112 for one year. I had a big rumble with the Glasgow council because in Aberdeen, you can apply for the licence and if everything is OK in the studio, you can run the business no problem. In Glasgow, I have been told, that we can't tattoo people for money until we have the licence. We can do it for free but we can't charge without the licence. What is the fucking point?"

So with three studios successfully up and running, does Seb have any plans to open up any more studios, say in England. Maybe even London? "No, definitely not. Three tattoo studios in the last four years is enough for me. I was thinking about making a move to Nice in France and opening

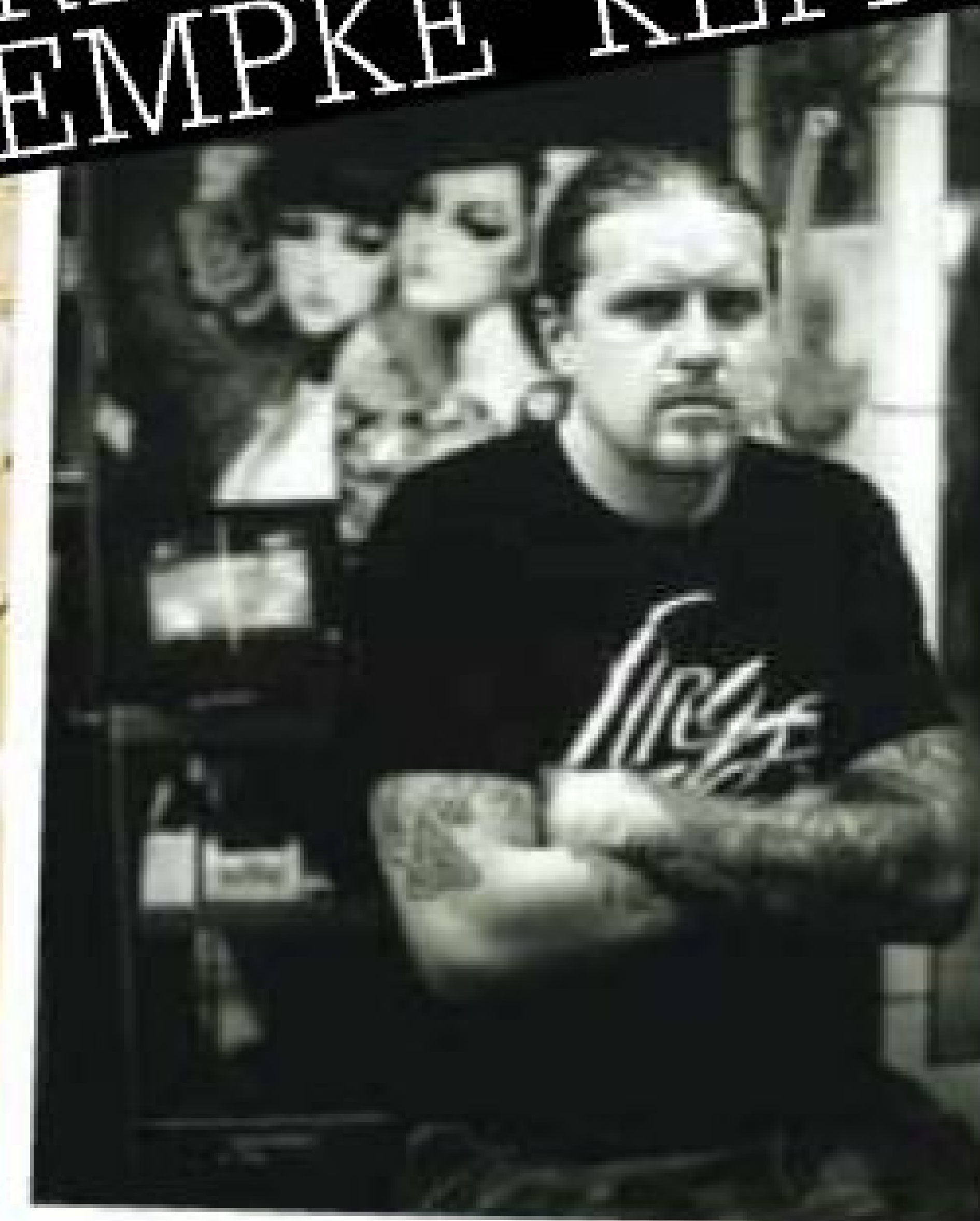
With the Polish tattoo artists, these people, they want to learn all the time. They don't think to themselves, 'We are the best now so we don't have to do nothing!

a tattoo studio there. I was trying to find premises but they were expecting something like forty thousand euros to take over a ruined shop. So first you pay that, then the agency fees, then the rent, then the refurbishment and decoration. It was all a bit too much - even for me!"

So maybe another studio in a different country completely might be

Some people say that he is a son of a Viking king - he looks like one of them. He is master of celtic and pagan, black & grey tattoos and has over six years of tattooing experience. He has been a member of the Rock'n'Roll tattoo crew since September 2009. He is also the co-owner (with Mr. Rzymisky) of Lucyfire Tattoo in Szczecin (Poland). With almost the same story of joining our crew as Mr. Rzymisky, he is the biggest Swedish melodic death metal maniac in our team. Though he is currently with us in

SEB ON
ARKADIUSZ 'HERR KEMPKE' KEPKA



Edinburgh, from July he will be forced to return to Poland and Lucyfire Tattoo Studio because of massive amount of customers waiting for his work. It will be very sad to say goodbye to Arek for a while but we'll definitely work together in the future and host him as a guest artist in all our studios.

pushing it but having being involved so heavily with the tattoo industry in Poland and then running three studios in Scotland, I'm interested to find out from Seb if there is much difference in how things operate between the two countries. "Tattooing in Poland, it is bigger now. I would say that the biggest difference is in the prices. Here in Scotland, you can spend £250

straight away for a tattoo because you have another £750 or £1000 to live but in Poland a good tattoo will cost you, say, two thousand zloty (approx £430) so you have to save for a good tattoo, sometimes a month, sometimes six months. But still the Polish tattoo studios are growing and growing. Also with the Polish tattoo artists, these people, they want to

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SEB ON

PETER RADULY



Peter is our resident artist in the Glasgow studio. He is our first non polish artist in the Rock'n'Roll family history! Peter is from Hungary and Rock'n'Roll Tattoo Glasgow is the first professional studio he has worked in ever! We found Peter working in a tyre shop in Aberdeen doing airbrushing and repairing cars. He had been a NATO soldier for five years, where he was also an amateur tattooist, when he decided to move to Scotland. A studio had promised him a permanent job but unfortunately nothing like that ended up happening. Reality is sad sometimes. But as soon as I saw his portfolio, I knew that I wanted him in our squad. He is a raw but very talented diamond which needs to be polished and needs a little bit more attention but when you look at his portfolio, it speaks for itself. At the moment, his favourite style is realism and colour tattoos.



learn all the time. They don't think to themselves, 'We are the best now so we don't have to do nothing!' All the time they are checking out new artwork and speaking to other artists. About techniques, about different inks, swapping experiences. And that's how they keep going forward. All the time improving themselves. The simple rule is, even if you are doing something small like lettering, or love hearts, it must be done tip top. One hundred and sixty-six percent good. And that's the reason why we are so popular in Scotland. Each tattoo for us is very, very important. You can spend millions on advertising but if that tattoo you do is crap, you'll be ruined soon enough."

Once again Seb proves why he is, as he has proudly told me before, "the brain of the operation called Rock'n'Roll Tattoo." There is no denying, when Seb sets his mind on something, very little is going to get in his way to achieve that goal. "I am really busy running the studios. So busy, I don't even have time to get my own tattoos now. All mine, they are from ten or fifteen years ago when I was in the band. You know I have three Facebook pages, three mySpace pages and a couple of Polish websites to run. To run a good tattoo studio, you have to learn how to run Facebook, how to do advertising, how the booths look at the tattoo convention, the promoting and advertising, the guest artists - all

this stuff I am doing myself. And my English is the best of the guys so I spend a lot of time chatting with the customers. A big help, is our manager Voytek from the Edinburgh shop. He is a body piercer and has been with us about four years now. In Glasgow I have a big help from our manager Adam and finally when it comes to Aberdeen, Aga and Stephen are on top of everything. So even though I am waiting for a moment to get more tattoos, it is not happening just yet."

The Rock'n'Roll family are hitting the convention circuit hard this year too - which is another area that seems to be a thorn in Seb's side: "In Scotland, each booth is supposed to have a wash basin and an autoclave; everything is supposed to look like a normal tattoo studio, which of course is impossible. Then in England people can do conventions without all this, why all these different rules? Tattooing, it is a massive industry right now, so I think that all the councils should do everything they can to help the tattoo conventions. I mean, it's prestigious to have a tattoo convention in a city. Unfortunately I think that some councils are just too closed."

Politics aside, there must be something that draws Seb to the conventions. "When I left the band, everything seemed a lot quieter. I had been used to doing big shows with Iron Maiden, Kreator, Sepultura and

It has been an amazing ride and I have to say a big thank-you to all our customers, especially the Scottish customers. They gave us a chance when we were new on the scene and they always believed in us.

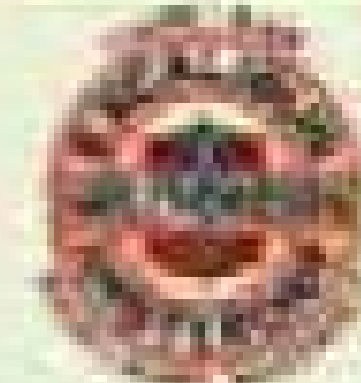


other big name bands. It was like I had nothing to do. So now, doing the conventions for me is like doing a good gig. The competitions, it gives me shivers talking about it. It's good, it's like being on the stage again. I have no time for the music anymore and my wife, she was never happy about the sex, drugs and rock and roll, but sometimes when we are doing the big competitions and are winning at the convention, that is a big party for us. We had tours with Behemoth and Vader and we were doing ten or fifteen gigs, day after day and it was a massive party. I had to decide to stop for my family and for my health. Yeah, I had a liver I didn't want to transplant."

Good thinking, though I am sure there will be plenty more celebrations to be had in the future for Seb and the Rock'n'Roll family. ★



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WORDS/PHOTOGRAPHY P-MOD

TOULOUSE

TATTOO CONVENTION

One of the oldest towns in France, Toulouse was founded by the Romans in the second century AD and is dubbed the 'pink city' because of the colour of the principal local building material: brick. Located between the Mediterranean and the Atlantic, 730km from Paris, Toulouse is considered to be a very important cultural and arts centre of France. It's also an ideal place to organise a tattoo convention.

Since the Toulouse Tattoo Convention began four years ago, each year has seen more and more visitors attend. This year, over 3,000 people were drawn to the Diagora Centre where the convention took place over the weekend of 15th and 16th January. Taking place in what is best described as an enormous room in Labège, a district of Toulouse, more than 70 tattoo artists gathered at the convention – where they were able to exchange ideas with their peers and with their customers.



Most of the tattoo artists came from the four corners of France, with the remainder traveling from elsewhere in Europe. Marc from Toulouse's Tattoo Ray studio was behind the event organization, together with the assistance of Pierre Laguens from La Cour des Miracles (the Courtyard of

the Miracles) studio, also in Toulouse. "The practice of tattooing has taken some time to be accepted," says Pierre. "When I began tattooing in Montpellier, in the mid 90s, it was difficult to get the right materials because there were very few suppliers."

When you look at the variety of people going to a tattoo convention, it's easy to see that tattoos appeal to all walks of life; young and not so young, men and women, eccentrics or otherwise. In the days before the tattooing 'craze' began, tattoo artists tended only to showcase their know-how among those who were well versed in the art form. Now, tattooing has reached the rank of artistic discipline and according to a recent poll from 'Ifop' institute, one in ten Frenchmen already has a tattoo.

The artistic nature of tattooing is something that is being increasingly recognised and many tattooers also express themselves in other forms through other media such as sculpture, painting, illustration or photography. Such is the case with Patrick





THE ARTISTIC NATURE OF TATTOOING IS SOMETHING THAT IS BEING INCREASINGLY RECOGNISED AND MANY TATTOOERS ALSO EXPRESS THEMSELVES IN OTHER FORMS THROUGH OTHER MEDIA SUCH AS SCULPTURE, PAINTING, ILLUSTRATION OR PHOTOGRAPHY.

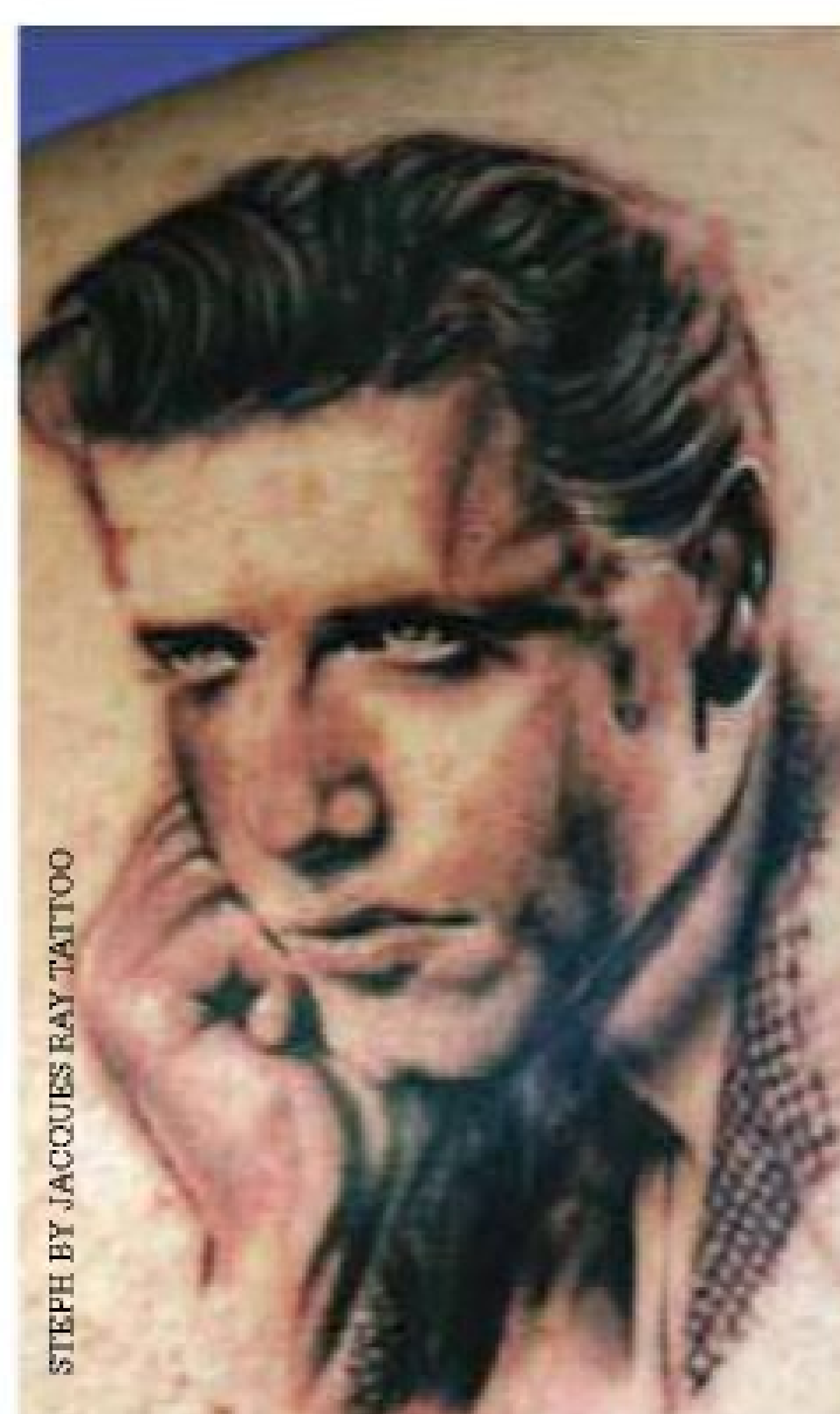
Chaudesaigues, who after many years of tattooing, painting and also trophy making, decided to communicate his love of tattooing and tattoo artists through a book entitled 'tatouage 21', in which he has gathered together a number important artists. The objective of this book is to arouse the curiosity of the public whilst also promoting an art which was practiced for several years in obscurity.

Back to the convention itself though, where 19 prizes rewarded the most

beautiful tattoos of the convention in the following categories:

Saturday: small tattoos, original tattoos and best of day. Sunday: Big tattoos, portraits/realism, best of day and best of show.

The winners in each category received paintings by Patrick Chaudesaigues. Each of these numbered, limited edition works of art is marked with an official stamp and delivered with a certificate of authenticity. A tattoo machine ➡



handcrafted by Lucien of Paris was also awarded for the winning artists in the best of day and best of show categories.

Grenouille and Alex were in charge of organising the tattoo competition and over 180 entries were received. Each entrant had their own motivations to show their tattoo but of course they also wanted to help their tattoo artist to gain more recognition. Whether a true follower or there simply out of curiosity, the tattoo convention provided a real

opportunity to admire the work of the professionals and to meet the most tattooed woman in the world: Isobel Varley, 73 years old, as well as the most heavily pierced man in the world: 'Prince Albert' so nicknamed because of the place of some of his piercings - at the age of 79, John Lynch, senior manager to Barclays Bank during 30 years and now retired, has 250 piercings on his body, among which 150 on his face and the head. ★

THE WINNERS IN EACH CATEGORY RECEIVED PAINTINGS BY PATRICK CHAUDESAIGUES. EACH OF THESE NUMBERED, LIMITED EDITION WORKS OF ART IS MARKED WITH AN OFFICIAL STAMP AND DELIVERED WITH A CERTIFICATE OF AUTHENTICITY



AND THE WINNERS ARE...

SMALL TATTOOS

- 1st Christian tattooed by L'encre du Peuple
- 2nd Daniel tattooed by Spirit of Tattooing (Valencia, Espagne)
- 3rd Steven Chaudesaigues, Graphicaderme

STRANGEST TATTOO

- 1st Tirs tattooed by Fresh Ink
- 2nd Tirs, Fresh Ink
- 3rd Spikez Hell

BEST OF DAY SATURDAY

- 1st Tirs Fresh Ink
- 2nd Alix (Versailles)
- 3rd Piero, La Cour des Miracles

BIG TATTOOS

- 1st Paul tattooed by Sakura Tattoo
- 2nd Julien, Clockwork Needle
- 3rd Piero, La Cour des Miracles

PORTRAITS/REALISTIC

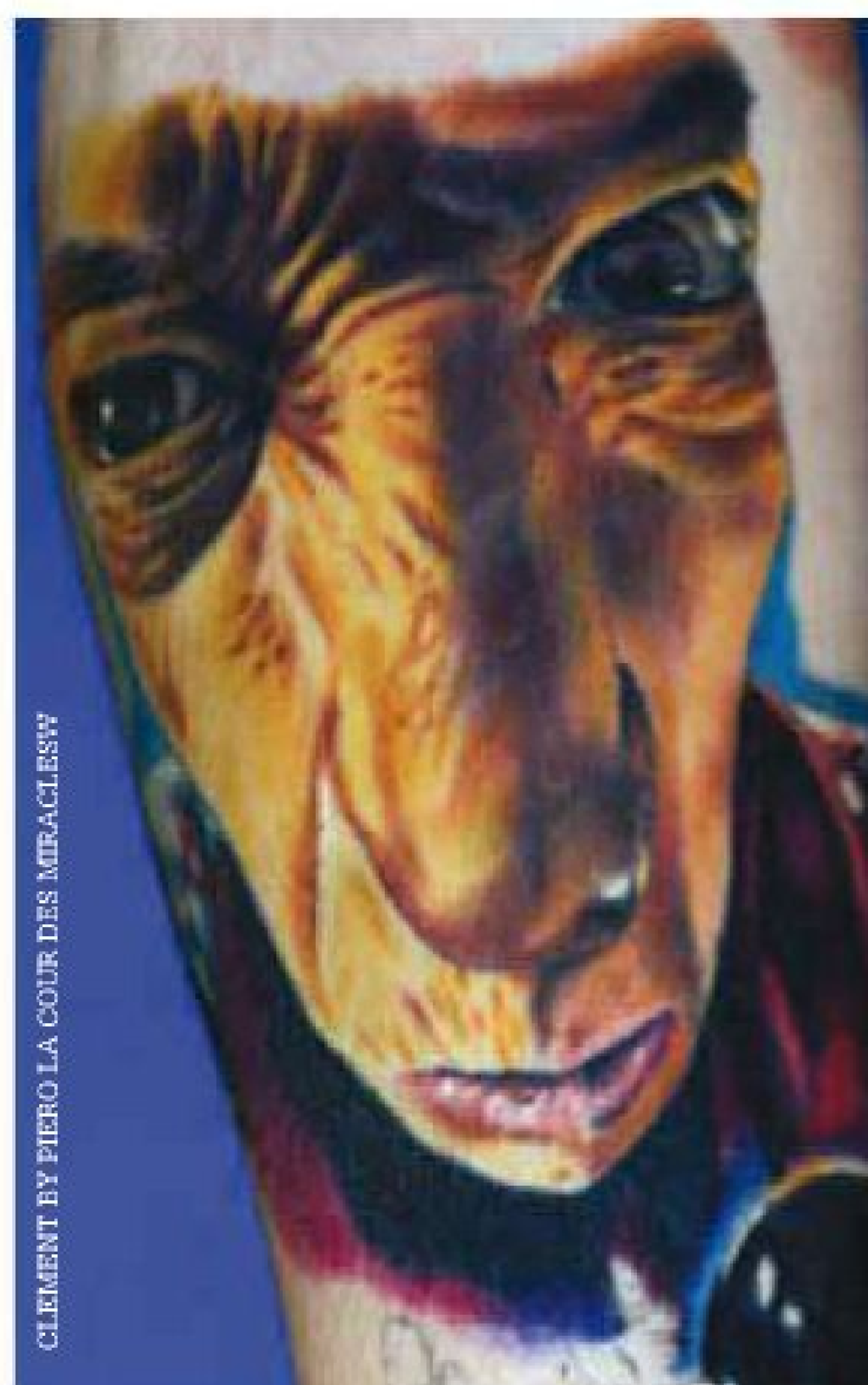
- 1st Stephane Chaudesaigues, La Bete Humaine (Paris)
- 2nd Piero, La Cour des Miracles (Toulouse)
- 3rd Sissou, Insolit Tattoo (Nimes).

BEST OF DAY SUNDAY

- 1st Tattoo Chris (Belgique)
- 2nd Twix, Eskimo Tattoo
- 3rd Julien, Dark Light Tattoo (On the road).

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WORDS BARBARA PAVONE IMAGES MARIO BARTH

THE KING OF INK

Here's a question: If you, yes you, could spend one hour talking to anyone, yes anyone, in the tattoo industry, who would you choose? I'll give you a second to ponder this proposition, but if the name Mario Barth isn't coming into your mind right about now – stop. You're making the wrong decision.

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Growing up in Austria, Barth began setting his tattoo roots at a time when tattooing was illegal in his home country and turf wars between

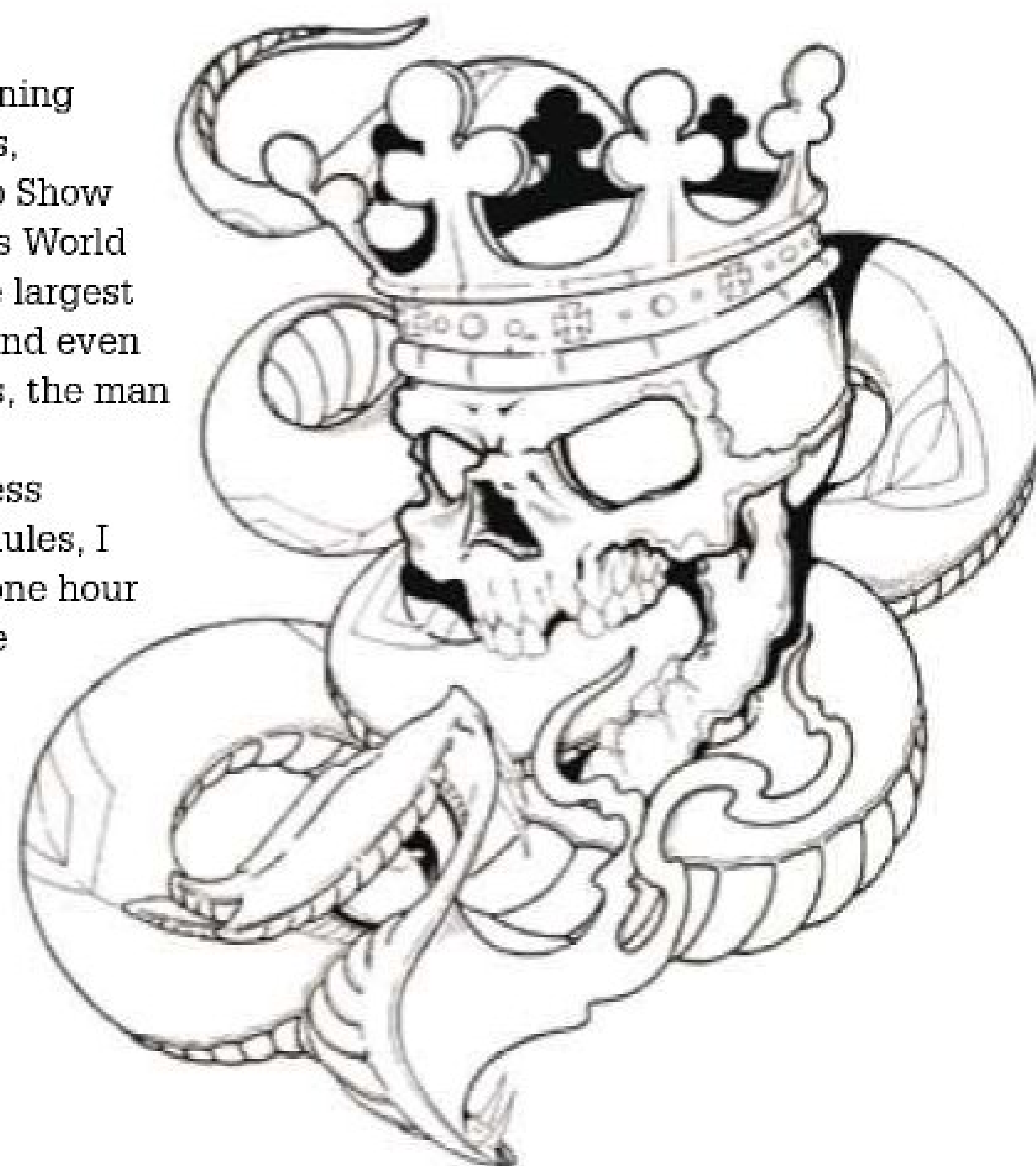
tattoo artists were rampant. The scene was dangerous and it wasn't always about getting the best looking artwork possible rather, it was about being rebellious.

Over the past few decades, Barth has come a long way from doing his first tattoo with homemade tools at the age of 12 (which his friend refuses to have covered up to this day, but can you really blame him?) to winning over

200 international awards, opening up numerous successful shops, organizing The Biggest Tattoo Show on Earth (which was Guinness World Record certified in 2009 as the largest tattoo convention in history) and even creating Intenze Products. Yes, the man is brilliant.

Following a couple of fruitless attempts at syncing our schedules, I was finally able to spend my one hour talking with Mario Barth as he called me from Las Vegas.

HAVING STARTED OUT AT A TIME WHEN TATTOOING WAS OUTRIGHT ILLEGAL IN AUSTRIA, WHAT DREW YOU TO THE ART FORM IN





THE FIRST PLACE?

"What basically happened is we had a little group of friends, which we called each other like a little street gang. Nothing like what you would see here in the States; it was just hanging out on the corner and being cool, and doing stupid stuff. One night, one of my friends said, 'Hey, we should get a tattoo' and then it was just like nobody wanted to do it.

"I had it explained one time by my father, he had a tattoo on his forearm, which he got in the military, and he was explaining to me how they did that with a little pen, like a ballpoint pen, and put needles in front of it and sewing thread and they used India ink, so I was like, 'Hey, I know how



BACK IN THE DAY, THERE WAS SO MANY LITTLE THINGS LIKE, IF YOU DON'T GET TATTOOED, YOU'RE NOT ALLOWED IN THE SHOP. IF YOU CAME IN WITH YOUR GIRLFRIEND, SHE HAS TO WAIT OUTSIDE BECAUSE YOU GET TATTOOED AND SHE DOESN'T.

to do it, so let me do it.' I did it right on top of his hand, between the thumb and the other finger, and it was a little skull which I put on there. That's how it actually started."

DO YOU REMEMBER HOW YOU FELT WHEN YOU WERE ABOUT TO ATTEMPT THAT FIRST SKULL? ANY NERVES?

"Not really, it was such an exciting thing to actually do. It was just a natural thing to actually start working on it; you didn't think what you really did. I mean, the tattoos at that time didn't have such a significance, it was just another mark. You weren't thinking like oh, you're gonna create this art piece,☺

MARIO ON... KING INK

"It's an ultra lounge and then at midnight it turns into a nightclub, and at three it's an after hours club. We're doing like 1,000 or 1,500 people a night there [and] those 1,500 people get educated during the night. We have the history of tattooing in the bar tops, we're playing Japanese tattooing movies on the television screens, there's so much stuff in there!"



WE HAD NO TATTOO MAGAZINES, WE HAD NO INFORMATION, WE HAD NO WHOLESALE, NO RETAILERS, COULDN'T GET ANY SUPPLIES, SO WE HAD TO MANUFACTURE EVERYTHING THAT WE WORKED WITH.

you were just like, 'Let me do it!' It wouldn't have mattered if there would have been three dots and everything else would have fallen out of the skin, nobody would have cared, so it was a different attitude. And the guy still has the tattoo, by the way, so it's not like he covered it up. I tried to cover it up, but he doesn't let me."

SO THE WHOLE ATTITUDE TOWARDS TATTOOING WAS VERY DIFFERENT BACK THEN?

"It was a real rebellion thing, you know? It was like we wanted to be tattooed so people wouldn't talk to us. Not like right now, you're tattooed then everybody approaches you and talks to you about how great your tattoos are. We wanted to be tattooed so people crossed the street. This is why we were basically outcasts, you know, we made ourselves this and it



was good that way, it was our way of life.

It was illegal to get them in my country, there was no legal tattoo studio, so it means anybody who had tattoos was automatically being stamped as an outlaw."

Having completed his first tattoo, Barth continued to offer the occasional ink when asked, but a few years later, another rebellious scene drew him even farther into the tattoo world.

"When I was about 17, I got really caught up in the motorcycle scene and then it really flared up. It was like everybody had tattoos and I got really interested in it, and I became very good

friends with my tattoo artist at that time, his name is Conny, and he actually tattooed me first. He gave me a half a sleeve as a first tattoo, and all from there is history."

Tattooing out of his house with homemade equipment, Barth's only exposure to tattooing was anything he could glimpse in the underground. "We had no tattoo magazines, we had no information, we had no wholesalers, no retailers, couldn't get any supplies, so we had to manufacture everything that we worked with. It was really, really primitive." And the situations artists were faced with on a regular basis weren't any better.





TEN YEARS AGO, THE GENERAL PUBLIC STILL DIDN'T SUPPORT TATTOOING AS MUCH AS IT DOES NOW. EVERY TATTOO SHOW WAS HELD IN A HOTEL IN A BALLROOM, IT WAS STILL THAT CLICHÉ, SO WE RENTED THE MEADOWLANDS EXPO CENTER. PEOPLE WERE THINKING WE WERE CRAZY...



SEEING AS TATTOOING WAS ILLEGAL, DID YOU EVER ENCOUNTER ANY REAL DANGER?

"At that time, there was a huge turf war between tattoo artists. It was a totally underground scene ... If somebody found out that you tattoo, you had to be ready that this guy is gonna show up in your apartment or show up in your place, or walk in on you when you tattoo somebody somewhere, and you get into a fight. There was a lot of that stuff. It was just a real different situation.

"There were like four tattoo artists in the whole country and they knew of each other, and even those four were eyeing each other up. It was almost like you were always ready to fight anywhere you go. If you were a tattoo artist, you're digging into that other person's territory automatically. You had to stand your ground to actually do it and keep going, and try to get more clients because your clients were also in that field, so it was like they went always with the stronger guy. Nobody wanted to get tattooed by a weak tattoo artist."

Around 1987, Barth took his first trip over to the United States. A trip that would literally change the entire course of his future tattoo life. At that time, there wasn't the slightest indication of the five extremely successful American shops he would go on to own, in fact, he had no idea legal tattoo studios even existed until he set foot on American soil, in the city he describes as the obvious choice.

"When I travelled to the States, I went to Orlando. Like any European, we come over, we go to New York first and then we go to Orlando. I opened up the phonebook and I was like, what is this? Is there tattoo places here? So I check it out in the phonebook and I find American Tattoo, which is Sailor Bill Johnson, so [that's] basically the first tattoo shop I really know." The first, and the most influential on his career:

WHAT HAPPENED WHEN YOU VISITED SAILOR BILL JOHNSON?

"I walked in there and I was like okay, I'm gonna go in and I'm gonna ask him some questions, but I was ready to get into a full-blown war in there, thinking if I go in and say 'Hey, I'm a tattoo artist from Austria, how you guys doing?' and then those guys go up and pull a shotgun out and we're gonna be fighting in there. This is what I expected because in Europe there was a couple shops in Germany and they had huge signs in the front window that said, 'If you're a tattoo artist, fuck off.' If you're a tattoo artist and you walk in, you will be bleeding.

"So I walk in and there's this big guy, Sailor Bill Johnson ... I had a translator with me at that time, which was my dad, and he said like, 'Listen, my son is a tattoo artist in Austria' and I was like okay, there we go, it's all gonna go downhill from here. And he's like, 'Oh, that's great, how you doing? How long have you been tattooing?' and I was

like what the fuck is this? I was totally thrown back and then I was hanging there for about four hours.

"I really was totally amazed by him. He was so friendly, he was so out there, so open with answering questions and I was like, that's different, so he left a lasting impression. I walked out of the shop and I said I'm going back to my country and opening up a legal tattoo studio. And I basically did."

WHAT WAS THAT FIRST STUDIO LIKE?

"It took me a year and half to turn over the ordinances and laws and I opened the first legal tattoo studio in 1989 in Austria. It was a very, very small studio, was maybe 350 square feet, but it had

MARIO ON... EDUCATING THE PUBLIC

"It's not about the 70 million people which have a tattoo [in America], it's about the 230 million which don't. And it's not that they should get one, but it should be that they will be educated who we are."

And the first lesson they should all learn? "We're regular human beings; we love what we do; we love our art form; we love to modify our body. We're in the year 2011, we all don't have to wear a Burberry suit anymore to be successful in business."





MARIO ON... TATTOO MAGAZINES

"I can't wait every day when I open up a magazine to see the new talent that's in there. People that nobody's heard of; people that have been tattooing six months, which outperform people working 25 years. Not only in the art piece, but also in the technique ... and it's only possible because of the freedom of the Internet and the exchange of information we all get now."

a very friendly approach. It was really Americanized, it had all American flags in it and steer skulls, and what we thought is really cool.

"Back in the day, there was so many little things like, if you don't get tattooed, you're not allowed in the shop. If you came in with your girlfriend, she had to wait outside because you get tattooed and she doesn't. It's like barbaric laws. Like, this is my cave, don't come in."

As business grew thanks to the shop's welcoming atmosphere, Barth began immersing himself more and more in the history and culture of tattooing. "I just got obsessed with travelling and meeting tattoo artists all over the world, and I was really starting to get into the educational part. That was really always my driving force because I was like, how come everybody tries to keep this so secluded from everybody else? I started to form organizations in Austria, rally the tattoo artists together, even the ones which were at first fighting me, like 'Listen, we're together in this, there's enough people for us to tattoo.'"

Working with some of the most respected artists in the world, including the sacred Suluape Tatau family in Samoa and Japan's Horitoshi 1 (who has put a full tebori back piece on Barth), Mario Barth was triggered to continue his search for the driving forces behind tattooing by the paradox that engulfs the art form. "It was always important enough to be banned throughout history, but it was never important enough to be put in history books. It's interesting. For me, it's like, how



IT'S STILL THE SAME CONCEPT THAT SAILOR BILL JOHNSON TOLD ME A LONG TIME AGO. GET THE PEOPLE IN; BE FRIENDLY; MAKE THEM COME BACK...

come if everybody says tattooing is not worthy to be even named in an art book, then why was it so important that it was banned during our lifetime?"

YOU NOW OWN FIVE AMAZING SHOPS IN AMERICA, TELL ME ABOUT YOUR MOVE OVER...

"When I opened up the shop in South Beach with my partner, Lou Rubino,

we wanted to build the most exclusive tattoo studio to set a new level (and they certainly did with the first OSHA-approved studio in the country). Then I moved to New Jersey and built another really high-end studio, really classy ... then I took the most frequented highway in New Jersey, where nobody said you could ever survive with a tattoo studio, and we built a studio there. It was the



first \$500,000 studio and it was amazing.

"Then was a plateau for me. I was like, where am I going next? So I started the tattoo shows about ten years ago. I wanted to get a grip on the general public. Ten years ago, the general public still didn't support tattooing as much as it does now. Every tattoo show was held in a hotel in a ballroom, it was still that cliché, so we rented the Meadowlands Expo Center, which in New Jersey is the biggest exposition center. People were thinking we were crazy, but what it did, it gave the tattoo show legitimacy because the expo center was hosting the biggest home shows and the biggest trade-shows, so it was where everybody in the normal public would think oh, it's safe to go."

Having established success in New Jersey, the never-resting Barth decided to once again set the bar even higher for himself. Choosing Vegas for his next move, Barth went after the MGM Group. "That, of course, was like insanity at that time,"

I JUST GOT OBSESSED WITH TRAVELLING AND MEETING TATTOO ARTISTS ALL OVER THE WORLD, AND I WAS REALLY STARTING TO GET INTO THE EDUCATIONAL PART.

admits Barth, but as history teaches us, there is nothing Mario Barth can't do.

Following two years of negotiations with the Mandalay Bay Resort and Casino, Barth opened a shop inside on February 16, 2008. "That was my next step to the mainstream because now, you go in somewhere where all America goes to, Mandalay Bay has a lot of credential to be an upscale hotel, so now people walk by and say 'Wow, there's a tattoo shop in here?' It gained legitimacy. And I can tell you still, 'till today, around 90 percent of the clients are first-timers in that store."

YOUR LATEST SHOP IS KING INK IN VEGAS, WHICH IS ALSO A BAR? HOW

DID THAT CONCEPT COME ABOUT?

"MGM Group was so impressed with [Mandalay Bay] that I got a chance to do another one at the Mirage, so now the whole thing shifted because I didn't want to build the same store again. I was sitting down and I was like, what do tattoo artists have in common? We all party hard; we all work 12 hours a day, 14 hours a day; we do what we want; we wanna listen to our music; we wanna have a drink, so I was like okay, let's do the crazy thing and build a bar in the tattoo shop.

"It's still the same concept that Sailor Bill Johnson told me a long time ago. Get the people in; be friendly; make them come back..." ★

WANT MORE...

Part two of this mammoth interview with Mario will be published next issue...

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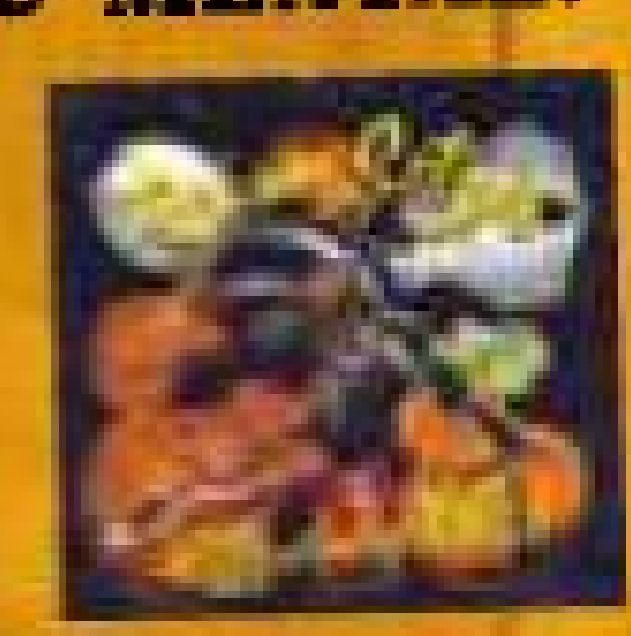
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BACK IN THE

NEW YORK GROOVE

WORDS/IMAGES IHSAN KEMAL

In February I decided a long overdue break from the hectic and draining side of London was necessary. I chose to have a relaxing holiday in LA in consideration of possibly moving there in the future. However I thought that I should check out some other states while I was there including New York. I just couldn't visit this state without getting a piece done by Seth Wood...

SAVED TATTOO
426 Union ave
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Currently residing at Saved Tattoo in Williamsburg, Brooklyn, I got in touch with Seth and to my surprise I received a prompt response and an eager attitude to do the design which I had asked for, always a positive aspect to a tattooist! Before I let him loose on me though, I have questions to ask – there's no way I'm asking them while I'm in the chair...

"I grew up in a really sleepy town, and lived a relatively tattoo-free existence until my friends and I were old enough to drive. We'd head up to Philadelphia every other weekend to





see punk shows and buy records. But even then, the only tattoos I'd see were band logos on kids' arms. I got my first tattoo when I was 19 by Erik Reith at bodygraphics in Philadelphia. These days he's one of the owners of Seventh Son in San Francisco. I wish I could say I still had it, but I didn't know what I was doing and drew it myself, so it's buried under another tattoo at this point."

In 1997, a friend of Seth's suggested he should get into tattooing. At the time Seth dismissed the idea but nonetheless started picking up tattoo magazines. As Seth so creatively puts it:

"There were so many alien foetuses and twisted out, desert chrome coffee cups in those things, but compared to what I knew of tattooing, it was

exciting. It's as though I already liked listening to songs on my one-stringed guitar, but then I opened up this magazine and saw a picture of a guitar with the other five strings, and my mind was blown all over the page by the possibilities."

His sudden interest in tattooing was not just out of nowhere. Seth has been drawing his whole life. Even in kindergarden taking requests to draw superheroes, dinosaurs and the like. Then going on to draw for fanzines, show flyers and even girls he had a crush on when he was a bit older. My personal preference for a tattooist is someone as enthusiastic about drawing as Seth, I think someone with a genuine passion for drawing gives the tattooist



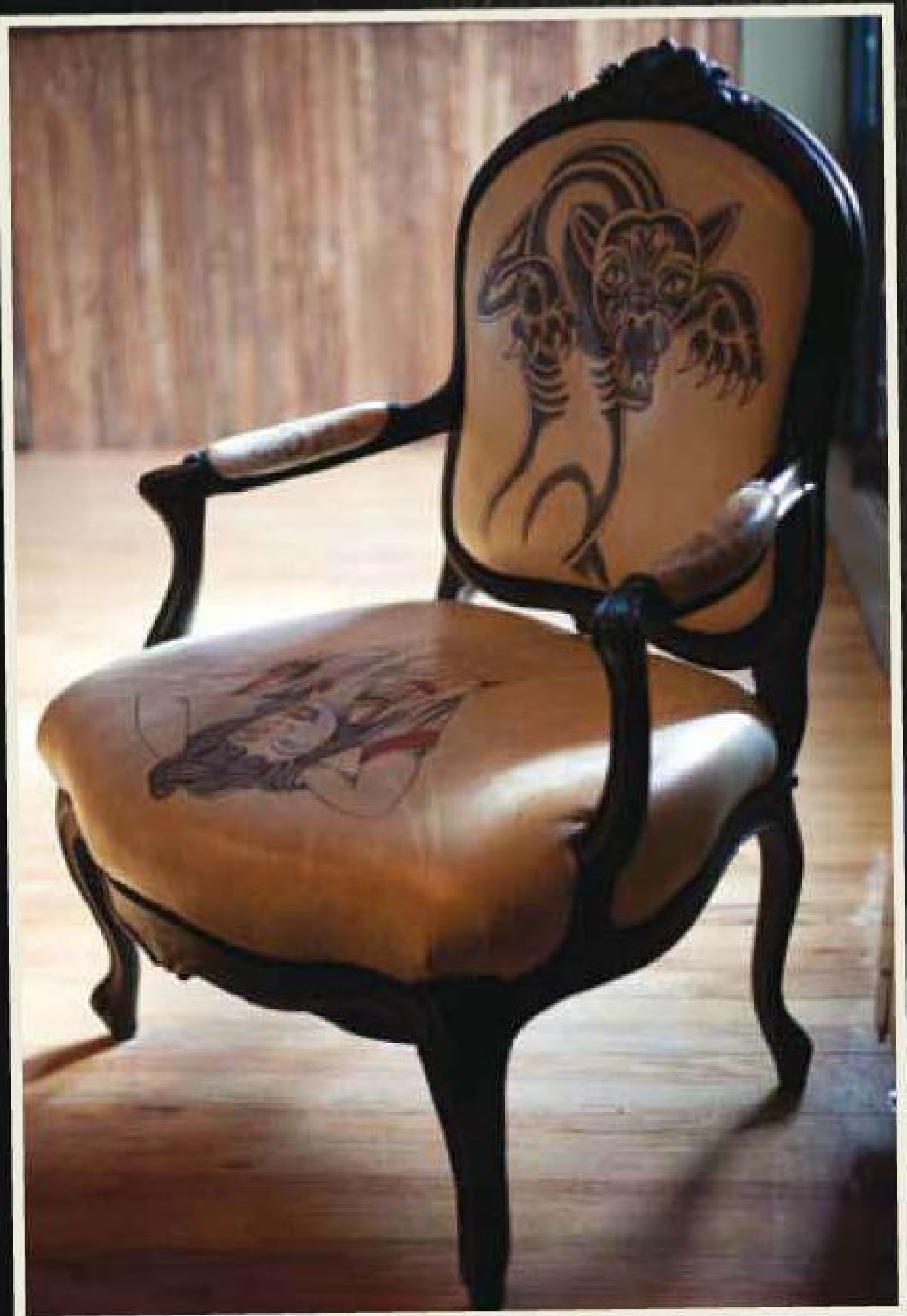
IT WAS JUST ALWAYS A BACKGROUND PART OF EVERYTHING. FOR WHATEVER REASON, TATTOOING WAS JUST THE FIRST THING I CAME UPON THAT SEEMED ACCESSIBLE, WHERE DRAWING COULD BE THE PRIMARY THING.

the ability to create a much more detailed and unique tattoo. This is evident throughout Seth's work:

"It was just always a background part of everything. For whatever reason, tattooing was just the first thing I came upon that seemed accessible, where drawing could be the primary thing.

"In the beginning, I made weird shaped scars on friends for a couple years that we were calling tattoos. Then I fell ass-backwards into a summer job at a street shop at the Jersey Shore... it was very seasonal and they really just needed a warm body in a chair for the tourist rush, but when I went back the next summer, after I had graduated from college, somebody else was using my station at the shop - its kind of crazy. If I had stayed there as planned, I probably would have been tattooing for another year or two at most, and then gone back to school.

MIKE WAS, BY A LONG SHOT, THE BEST TATTOOIST IN THE AREA AND OVER ABOUT 3 YEARS OF WORKING WITH HIM, HE TAUGHT ME EVERYTHING I MISSED FROM AN APPRENTICESHIP: NEEDLE MAKING, MIXING PIGMENTS, MACHINE BASICS.



Instead, Mike Siderio at Rebel Image hired me. He was, by a long shot, the best tattooist in the area and over about 3 years of working with him, he taught me everything I missed from an apprenticeship: needle making, mixing pigments, machine basics. You know... all the stuff that no one bothers to learn anymore."

Seth agrees that an apprenticeship is the best way to become a tattooist; "otherwise your ability will always be two steps behind your ambitions and unlike now, where you can see everyone's work online, I much prefer to travel to meet and talk with tattooists in different towns and to see their flash."

Priding himself on basing his work





I REALLY LOVE FINDING THE SPACES TO INSERT THAT EXTRA NARRATIVE . LIKE A LOT OF THE STUFF I DO SEEMS REALLY ARBITRARY, BUT SOME SEEMINGLY RANDOM THINGS ARE A KIND OF BIOGRAPHIC ICONOGRAPHY.

around traditional styles of tattooing, he certainly does some unique and quirky work:

"It's all based out of traditional styles of tattooing. I do some weird images I guess but a tattoo of a cat wearing Edwardian formal dress is really just a matter of making substitutions into a Gibson girl. I got a lot of fine line influence from working with Mike - he totally killed it with portraits and realism, so even though I want a typical tattoo to look really strong and readable, I like to tweak out little details most of the time, like a tattoo within the tattoo – a bonus for whoever bothers to take a closer look!

"I really love finding the spaces to insert that extra narrative. Like a lot of the stuff I do seems really arbitrary, but some seemingly random things are a kind of biographic iconography. Mice, for example, make a lot of cameo appearances in my tattoos, and they're a tribute to my grandfather, who was a paleontologist who dedicated his life to the study of rodents.

"It's fun in a kind of mischievous way, because you feel like you're getting away with something. But I think it works out to everyone's benefit. It definitely makes for a body of work that you're much more attached to." ➡





When discussing influences, Seth is equally as candid:

"I'd like my tattoos to look like Chris Conn tattoos if he ran out of small liner needles, and was in a hurry to finish the shading!"

"Outside of tattooing, John Audobon and Walton Ford - natural history field guide meets frontier adventure kind of stuff - and Kuniyoshi, Yoshitoshi. That might not be as obvious, but all of those antique woodblocks are so good at capturing a moment from which you can tell a whole story. I love that narrative



I'D LIKE MY TATTOOS TO LOOK LIKE CHRIS CONN TATTOOS IF HE RAN OUT OF SMALL LINER NEEDLES, AND WAS IN A HURRY TO FINISH THE SHADING!

quality. Even if you're not doing Japanese tattoos, there's a lot to learn from those materials."

In the autumn of 2009, Seth was invited by the extremely talented owner of Saved Tattoo - Scott Campbell - to join the shop. After traveling for two years prior to this tattooing from city to city, totaling over 30 trips to about 25 different cities, Seth graciously accepted a place he could call his home.

"Everyone in the shop was really fun to be around, and - I'm not a big Feng

Shui guy - even just the physical space in that shop would get me excited to tattoo. I wasn't looking for a new gig in NYC, but I was hanging around there a lot when I was home in between trips (I was part way through two years of voluntary homelessness and tattooing on the road). But Scott Campbell invited me on, and it seemed like the best place for me to land when I was ready to come back to New York.

"A year later when I officially moved back to Brooklyn, it was a completely





different shop. It changed locations. Chris (O'Donnel) bought into the shop. As mellow as the ambience is at Saved, it's been a pretty dynamic process, watching the shop grow and shrink on an almost weekly basis, but it's pretty exciting to be a part of this animal, since it only seems to be getting stronger... soon it will take flight and vanquish all her enemies."

Seth is also a man who believes that you shouldn't be allowed to call yourself a tattooist these days unless you are contributing to the glut of tattoo paintings that are out there:

"Most of the stuff I've painted has been specific to a project, like someone's show or book, or done as promotion for a guest spot or a convention. It's all very connected to tattooing. But I hope that once I get a little more settled into my routine in NYC, that I can start cranking out some paintings that are totally independent of the tattoos I do.

"And woodworking is awesome! Our TV is sitting on a credenza I built it to fit our apartment. There's something exceptionally rewarding about making something that has actual ongoing use-value. Plus it's reassuring to know that, if the apocalypse gets going next year, as scheduled, I can fashion an emergency shanty or maybe a canoe out of the rubble.

"You know, the tattoo industry provides tattooists with a captive audience for their paintings or whatever else they like to do. I don't have any expectations that, taken out of that context, anyone would find my creative output particularly relevant or notable. Plus, when you do step outside of

I DID THE COVER DESIGN AND ILLUSTRATIONS FOR A VEGAN COOKBOOK THIS PAST SUMMER. IT WAS A FUN CHALLENGE, BUT THE AMOUNT OF ART DIRECTION INVOLVED AT EVERY STEP OF A TYPICAL DESIGN JOB CAN BE FRUSTRATING.

tattooing, you really come to appreciate how much autonomy you're given as a tattooist.

"I did the cover design and illustrations for a vegan cookbook this past summer. It was a fun challenge, but the amount of art direction involved at every step of a typical design job can be frustrating. I'd rather blast tribal arm bands all day then have to get multi-stage approval from a committee before my design can go on a coffee cup for some chain restaurant."

Interview over, it's time for role reversal. Seth showed me my tattoo design. I was both excited and impatient about getting it done. After a few hours of redrawing the design to fit properly on my chest, we began. The most unbearable three hours for me to sit through contrasting with the most fun three hours for Seth inflicting untold amounts of pain on my chest, torso, ribs and hips.

All I can say is it was definitely worth it. When not tattooing, you can catch Seth riding bikes, snowboarding, relaxing in nude hot springs or chilling with his dog, Pubes. He may also eventually have his website finished at www.sethwoodtattoo.com or eventually he might get a portfolio together to put out in the shop. ★





WORDS TRENT AITKEN SMITH
IMAGES PAPA JOE

SOMETHING WICKED THIS WAY COMES...

Papa Joe is a sign writer and tattooist who currently operates out of Boise, Idaho. His hand painted signs are big, bold and ballsy – we felt a need to find out about the man and these amazing signs he creates...

When I was a kid, I loved going to the funfair. All the flashing lights, everything spinning and whirling at a million miles an hour, the noise - it was like being in another world for a few hours. The other thing I loved about the fairs was those hand painted signs outside the booths and rides. Their bright colours and bold lettering announcing another crazy ride or mysterious secret hidden away in some dark corner of the fair. I like to keep an eye out for these signs but you don't see them for sale that often anymore. I was beginning to think that this style of sign writing was yesterday's news, and then I

met Papa Joe Dawson...

"Being a kid, in the San Francisco Bay area, during the sixties, naturally I became a juvenile delinquent like all my friends. I liked to draw and people seemed to like my art. After learning some lessons the hard way and not wanting a regular job I turned to sign painting. In 1976, I started working and learning in sign shops in Santa Cruz in California but it was when I moved up to the Oakland Bay area, where I had my real training. Walls, windows, storefronts, wooden signs, awnings, trucks, boats - you name it, I did it!"

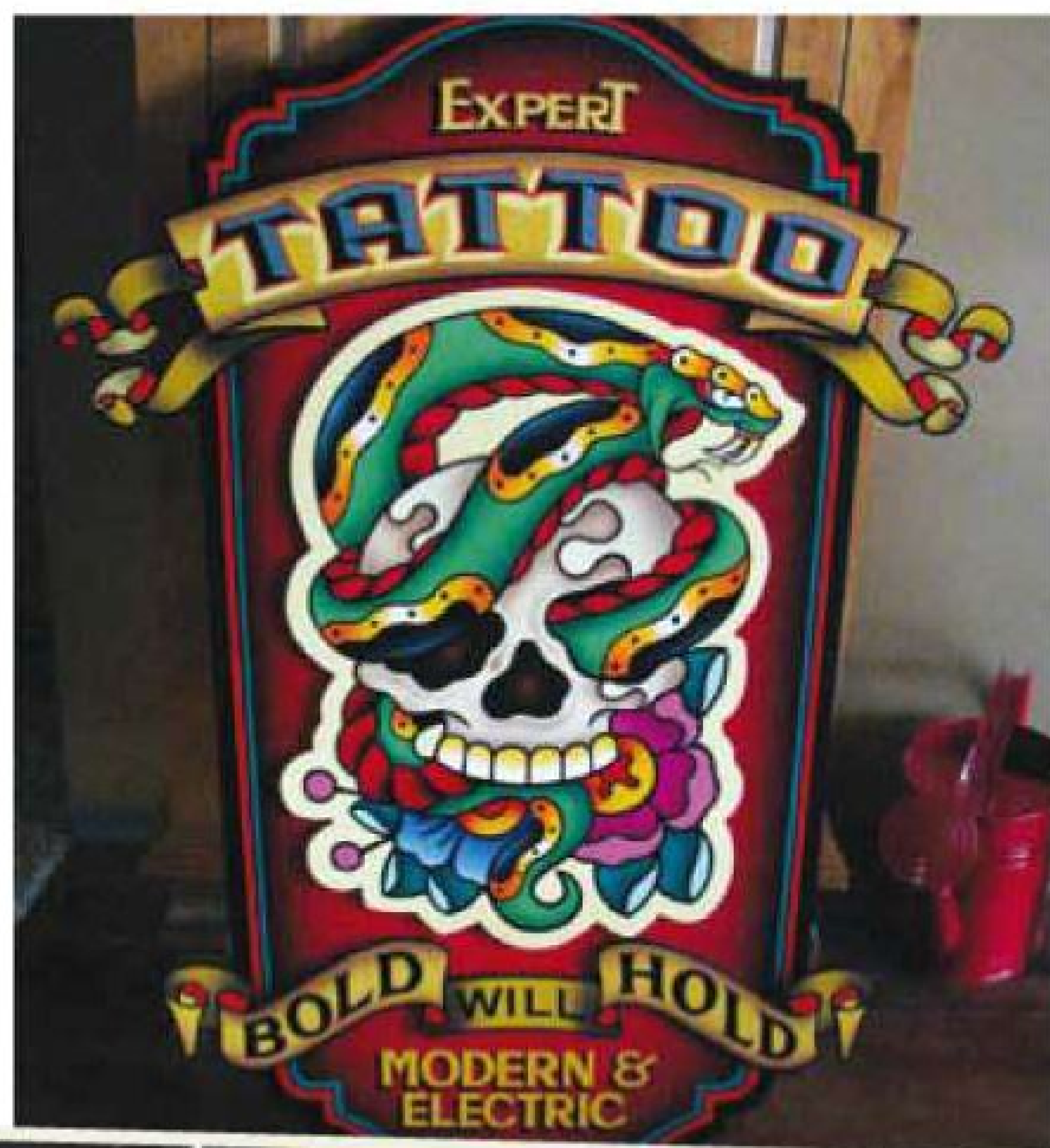
"When I started painting signs, things were different. It was an artist's trade. Of course there were a few that were 'mechanics' but most had some art talent. You really had to pay your dues to be called a sign painter - usually that

would take roughly seven years of day to day lettering. When you could lay out and execute correctly, one inch block letters - with very minimal layout - you were getting there. Then you started adding to your 'bag of tricks' with gold leaf lettering on glass, real water size made from gelatine and pictorials on signs - stuff like that."

But as with everything modern, the world of 'handmade' signs started to get replaced by mass produced 'machine made' signs - technology enabled them to be created quicker with the added bonus of less staff to pay.

"As the years of sign painting went on, there came the emergence of the 'sign computer'. These machines had the ability to cut perfect letters of all fonts, all sizes and all shapes! Suddenly the sign trade moved from being an artists





trade to a businessman's endeavour. Like 'should I open a sandwich shop or a sign shop?' Things changed rapidly and I was becoming a dinosaur. I would contract to paint signs for companies that had no clue about sign painting. The main problem was that people in general, were getting used to the generic vinyl lettering on a surface. The creativity was disappearing."

Time for a change in career and Joe found himself entering a world not to far removed from that he had been working in. "I always had an interest in tattooing. I got my first tattoo when I was twenty-two. It was a flower and a banner with the name 'Donna' on it. I had just wandered into a shop by a military base in Alameda, California. It was Ricky's Tattoo - brother of the late Pinky Yun. Donna was the first of my

three ex-wives. She apparently was a little smarter because she got a four-leaf clover instead of my name. So one day I traded a sign with a guy, who was opening a new tattoo shop, and in return he taught me the basics of tattooing. He wasn't very good at tattooing and worse at drawing but I had a starting point. I started trading signs for tattoo work and eventually I all but gave up sign painting for some years. I mainly wanted to concentrate on learning to tattoo."

"So I was working for this guy that was 'teaching' me mostly wrong techniques and I looked around the shop and all I could see was lousy artwork. In the end, I walked out and started my own studio with what I had figured out. And again, things were different then and people weren't so free with information.

YOU REALLY HAD TO PAY YOUR DUES TO BE CALLED A SIGN PAINTER - USUALLY THAT WOULD TAKE ROUGHLY SEVEN YEARS OF DAY TO DAY LETTERING.

"Living in the Santa Cruz mountains, I started by tattooing bikers and hippies - my studio was across the street from a biker bar. Then I started doing motorcycle rallies, Sturgis was a regular for me. I always dug the street shop scene, where you take on all comers. You never know what or who will walk through the door. I opened my second studio with a partner in Santa Cruz, it was a nice big shop in an old bank, but due to old habits rearing their ugly heads, this lasted only a couple of years. ☹

**SOMETHING
WICKED THIS
WAY COMES...**



I ALWAYS DUG THE STREET SHOP SCENE, WHERE YOU TAKE ON ALL COMERS. YOU NEVER KNOW WHAT OR WHO WILL WALK THROUGH THE DOOR.

"So, I took to the road and ended up in New Orleans working at a series of street shops. Now those are some real street shops - there was always a bat or gun handy for whatever may develop.

I guess, at the end of the day, I'm just a walk in tattoo kind of guy. It's fun to do big sleeves and ongoing projects but I've always been kind of partial to putting a tattoo on a hoodlum that gives him a little more swagger and attitude. Or putting a nice 'girly' tattoo on a sweet young thing. It is a selfish instant gratification because when they love the tattoo they think you're great too. Even if you know you're just like any other clown, you just happen to be an artist."

"After hanging around New Orleans

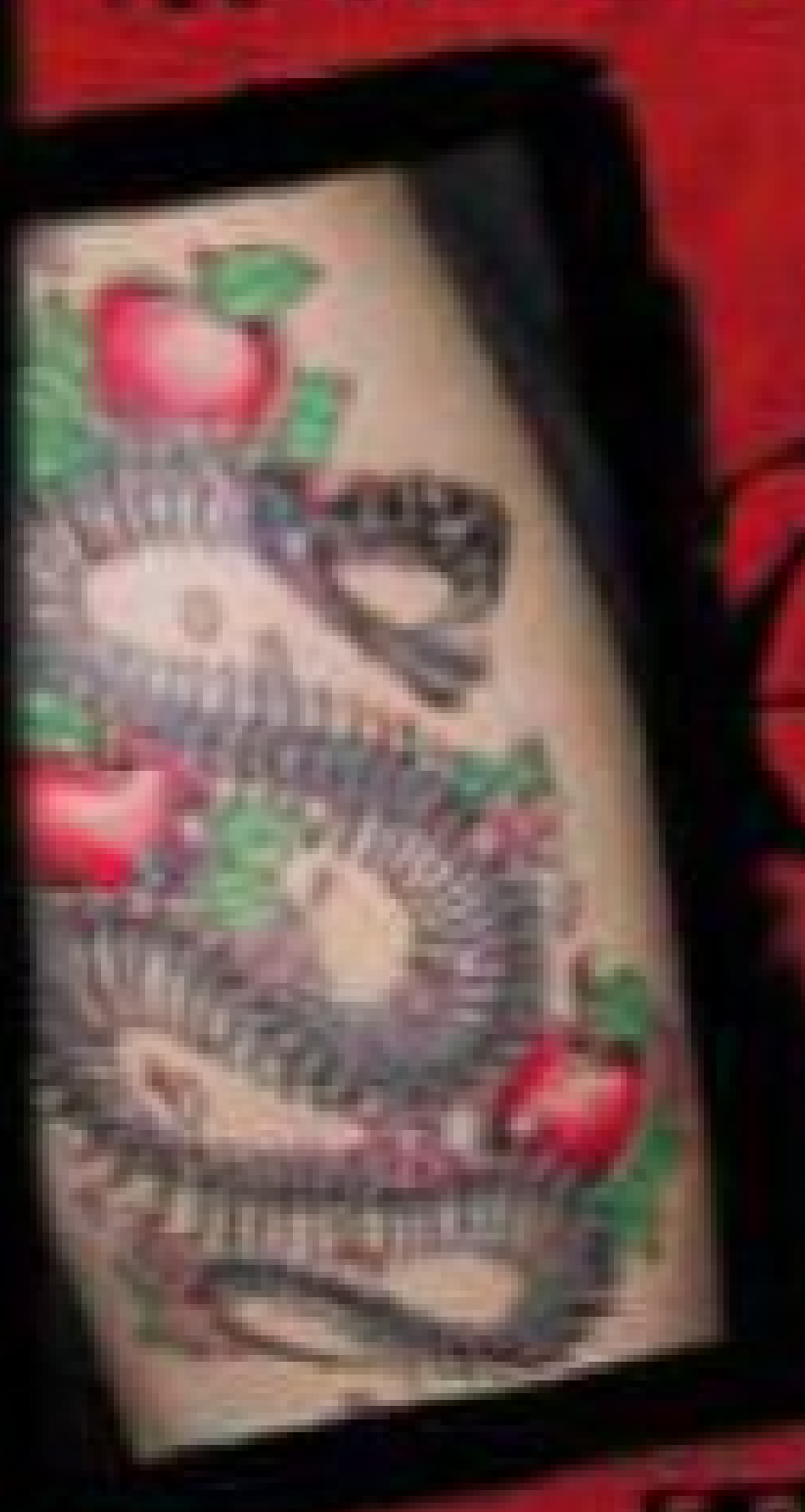
for about six years it was time to go. I went through a lot in that town including Hurricane Katrina and Orleans Parish Prison. It is the kind of town that will teach you or kill you! I left there with my mind right. In the end, I moved to Idaho to be near family and started on my own thing. I have a tattoo studio where I work by appointment (no street shop for now) and I have a sign studio as well. There has always been a lot of interest in sign painting from tattooists and I guess, eventually I came full circle." ★

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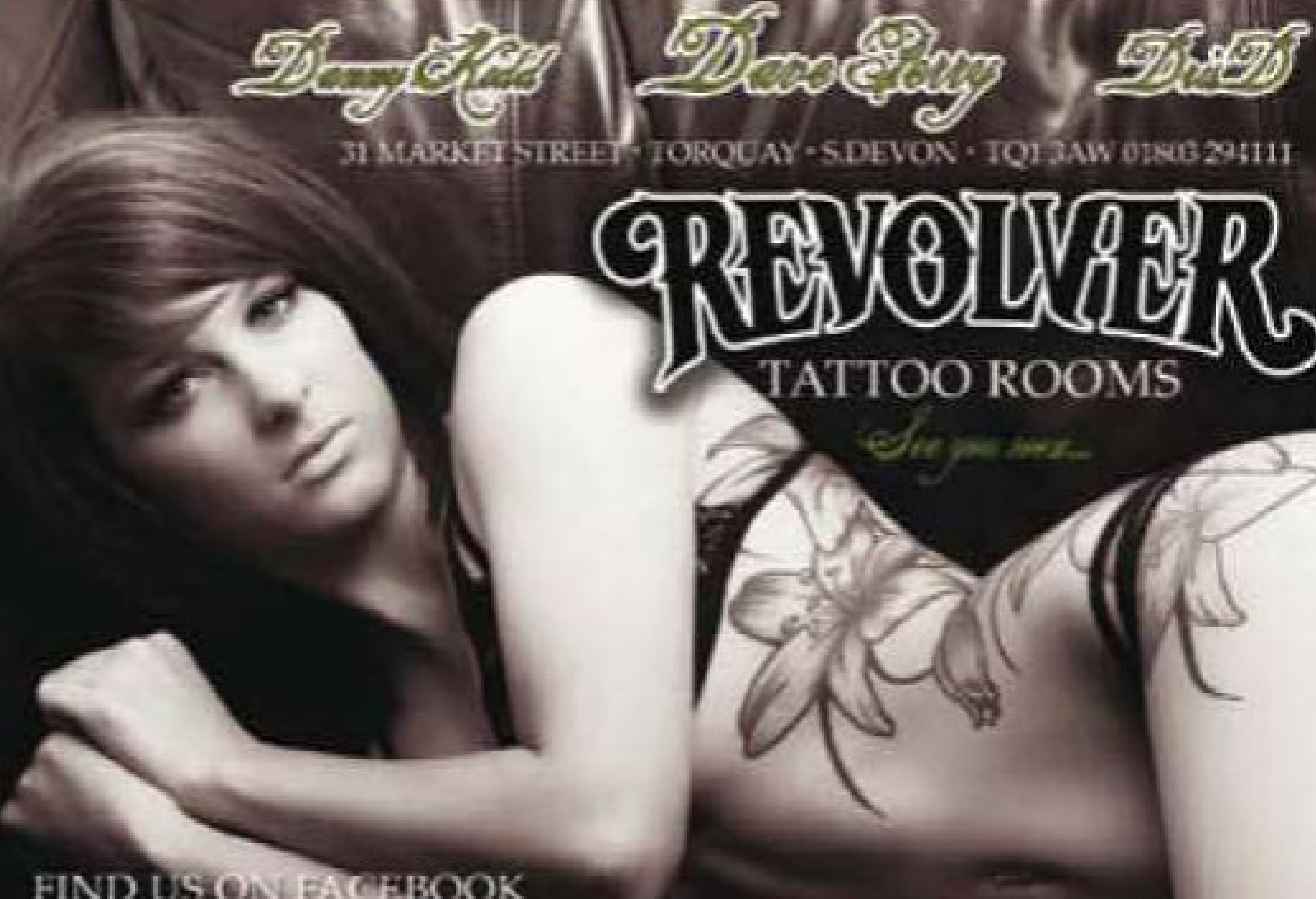
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WORDS SION SMITH
IMAGES VICTOR POLICHERI

LIKE A ROLLING STONE

Victor Policheri last appeared in Skin Deep over three years ago - a lot can change in three years that's for sure. In Victor Policheri's world - the man who lives five days to your one - that amounts to an awful lot of stuff...

CONTACT

www.viptattoo.com

“

Indeed a lot has changed since the last feature. I was living in Seattle at the time.

Now, I've spent four years living in Barcelona. It's been a challenge, an adventure, and an amazing journey. Though I did a short piece of time in a shop in Barcelona, for the majority of the last four years I've worked as a guest in a variety of other shops in other countries including Boucherie Moderne in Brussels, Lost Highway in Tournai, Belgium, Tatau Obscur in Berlin, Art Corpus in Paris, Alpha Tattoo in Hattingen, Germany, Individual Ink in Turku, Finland, Tattoos.No in Alesund, Norway, Lucky 7 in Oslo, and Heidi Hay Tattoo in Gothenburg, Sweden. Actually, I may be leaving out one or two. In addition I do between 6 and 12 conventions a year.”

THAT'S SOME SERIOUS MOVING AROUND, BUT IT OBVIOUSLY SUITS YOU.

“Yeah - I spend my time between trips in Barcelona where

I very rarely tattoo. I have a painting studio here and try to get as much of that done as I can. Also, I am still very attached to my guitar and apparently, no matter how much I study, I will never be good at Spanish. It's getting better though.

“I guess my biggest change, I would say it's been a good one, has been to take my primary focus a bit away from tattooing and grow in some other ways. I've learned and practiced oil painting in that time. Though I had

dabbled in painting before, I had never really focused on it, and that has been amazing. I love oil paint and hope to continue improving at it. In addition I play as much guitar as I have time for, mostly acoustic solo style stuff. Also, I've had much more time for drawing outside of just what I was going to tattoo. I think the most surprising effect of all of that is that I have improved quite a bit in my tattooing.

“I was always told and shared the belief with many of my friends who





tattoo that to improve you need to tattoo constantly, as much as you can. I'm not saying I don't believe that working hard is a very important way to learn, but after a long period of it, stepping away and focusing elsewhere has proved to change the way I compose images and the technique I use. I felt I had plateaued and now I feel like I've entered a new arena with different and better possibilities."

GIVEN THAT WHEN YOU LEFT MINNESOTA WAY BACK WHEN, YOU CONSIDERED YOUR GUITAR AN ESSENTIAL ITEM TO TAKE WITH YOU, DID YOU HAVE DESIGNS ON MAKING IT IN A BAND BACK THEN?

"I still have the same guitar my dad gave me when I was 16 years old. It has crossed the United States strapped to the back of my motorcycle. I still love to play. As far as a band, I've considered it before. I've started practicing with different guys at different times, but it never seemed to work out. My focus was always elsewhere, tattoo mostly.

"I play a lot of classical and finger picking stuff. I've written a good deal of my own music and I can say confidently that some of it doesn't suck. Though I was never really self assured in front of an audience, I used to do some solo shows and music was like pool for me. Most days I was reasonable,

but not exceptional. Some days you'd swear I was holding the cue/guitar in the wrong hand I was so bad, but on a few occasions I played shows where I was really dialed in and I will tell you that shit was damn good. In a couple of open mics, where you KNOW nobody's doing anything except waiting for their own turn, I actually got the whole bar to shut up, put down their beers and drop their jaws.

"Of course, I've been laughed off the stage too. Had I put more focus on it I believe I could've had a career in music, but I was focused happily elsewhere. I play best on an intimate basis, for a friend or two in my own living room. And truly I play my optimum - and thank God for this - when I'm playing for a cute girl and I want to know what color her panties are. I swear I've raised angels!"

YOU'RE SPENDING A LOT OF TIME THESE DAYS IN EUROPE - ARE YOU FINDING IT A GOOD PLACE TO WORK OUT OF. I'VE SEEN INCREDIBLE AMOUNTS OF TALENT OUT HERE, AND A LOT OF IT THAT HASN'T BEEN FEATURED GLOBALLY EITHER. ARE YOU FINDING THE SAME AND HAVE YOU SEEN PEOPLE AT WORK THAT HAVE MADE YOU RAISE YOUR GAME?

"Holy shit - have I had the pleasure and

MORE TIMES THAN I COULD TELL YOU I'VE BEEN WORKING WITH SOMEONE WHO I'VE NEVER HEARD OF WHO AND WHO IS NOT TRYING TO MAKE ANY SORT OF NAME FOR THEMSELVES WHO PUT OUT SOME OF THE MOST ORIGINAL AND FUCKING AMAZING WORK I'VE COME ACROSS.

privilege to work with some seriously amazing artists! Many of them are recognized globally, as I meet many of them at conventions, but more times than I could tell you I've been working with someone who I've never heard of who and who is not trying to make any sort of name for themselves who put out some of the most original and fucking amazing work I've come across.

"There is no shortage of talent in Europe, but to name a few, working with Jef of Boucherie Moderne - wow! He has been featured in many places since I first met him and worked with him, but there is some seriously original and great work and before we met I didn't know his name or his style. Also Stina Nyman of Sweden. I met her when we shared a booth at ➡

Stockholm convention. Her book just blew my mind! Incredible colour and her incorporation of art nouveau in a graphic style are magnificent! There are so many others really. It wasn't so long ago the first time I flipped through the portfolios of the Buena Vista Crew either. They completely redefined everything! Graphic collage and use of space I had not previously seen in tattoos. Plus, they're all cool as hell and great company to boot.

"Then you have guys like Fat (Iker Ruiz). This fucking guy - I remember when Damon Konklin of Seattle and I were discussing the future of tattooing being color realism. This was about 6 or 7 years ago. I was pretty good at it, if I busted my ass and worked long, slow sessions. Now I watch Fat work and in a minimum of time, this fucker shits out masterpieces! Absolutely beautiful work with original and cool composition and acts like it might have been an accident - Hijo de Puta! To boot, he is

**EVERYWHERE I TRAVEL I WALK
ON STREETS THAT HAVE BEEN
AROUND LONGER THAN THE
BIRTH OF THE UNITED STATES.
THE WORD 'OLD' TAKES ON A
NEW MEANING.**



a great guy too. There is a ton of other talent out here and I love the inspiration they have to offer - and damn straight it raises my game!"

**DO YOU FIND YOURSELF
UNDERGOING DIFFERENT KINDS OF
CULTURAL OSMOSIS BY GETTING
AROUND SO MUCH? IS IT EASY TO
BE INSPIRED FROM COUNTRY TO
COUNTRY OR DOES IT SIMPLY BLUR**

AFTER A LITTLE WHILE?

"I am absolutely inspired by all the places and cultures I've seen. At the same time, there is certainly some blur too. After four years I've soaked in quite a bit of Spain and the life here. I've also spent a lot of time in Scandinavia and growing up in Minnesota, then moving to Seattle (both full of Scandinavians), something about being up there feels very familiar, even apart from the seriously shitty weather.

"I am a cook and it's something I really love doing. As well as having learned from the art and lifestyles in different places, I've picked up hints and cooking styles in different cities and countries. Being in Europe has also offered me access to culture far older than the country I've come here from. Everywhere I travel I walk on streets that have been around longer than the birth of the United States. The word 'old' takes on a new meaning.

"In different cities, I always love to enter the cathedrals to see the architecture and artwork inside. The cathedral in Tournai, Belgium is between 900 and 1000 years old. In its millennia in existence the dreary gray skies and regular rain have made the grand building look like they do. Inside, the ceilings vault majestically high and challenge the imagination as to how you could construct such a place, especially 1000 years ago!

My other favorite is that I've gotten to see the museums of many of my favorite artists. The Van Gogh in Amsterdam, the Mucha museum in Prague, the Dali museum in Figueres, the Miro museum here in Barcelona, as well as some of the great old museums of Europe; The Louvre, the Prado, the Uffizi, the Natural History Museum in London, and traveling shows of other classic artists. It is always amazing to see in person paintings I've known all my life."





ARE YOU A DRIVER OR A FLYER? DO YOU GET TO SEE THE REAL PARTS OF THE CITIES YOU END UP IN, THE REAL UNDERBELLY? DOES ANYTHING SURPRISE YOU STILL OR DO YOU SEE THE SAME KINDS OF UNDERGROUND THINGS GOING ON WHEREVER YOU ARE?

"These days I am a flyer. I hope to change that. I used to tour parts of the US with my gear on my motorcycle and that has always been my goal in Europe. I hope in the next year or two to be attending some of the summer conventions on motorcycle. I love to road trip, more than I can say. For now though airplanes it is.

"If I were only doing conventions, I would not have had the experiences with different cities I've had. If I've never been to a city I try and add a day or two to a convention trip, but it is never enough to get to know a place. My guest spots have really offered me a chance to know the life of different cities. I've spent quite a bit of time in Berlin and Oslo. Also in Paris, which I loved, and perhaps strangely, a little town called Alesund, Norway. It's a small fishing town on the west coast of Norway that I'm quite acquainted with.

"As far as the undergrounds go, sure, there is often some similarity

among places, but certainly different places have their own flares and specialties. Berlin is a huge artistic city with all kinds of cool shit going on all the time. It seems like most other places, over time the cool factor given by the art scene will raise the price of living and push out the art scene, but that just seems to be the way. For now it is still alive, diverse, and interesting! Oslo is a great city too, with it's midnight sun, shitty weather, and the variety of inspired stuff going on there. I went to their annual fetish party last year. Trust me, no shortage of freaks in that town!"

LET'S TALK PAINTING - WHAT HAPPENS TO THEM? DO YOU EXHIBIT AND SELL OR DO YOU SIMPLY LIKE HAVING THEM AROUND AS PART OF YOUR PORTFOLIO AT THE STUDIO?

Is it just something that's inside that has to come out, so it doesn't really matter where they end up? I know quite a few artists who don't really care simply because 'the art was only there to be created'.

"The painting is coming along. I am actually having my first exhibition in about two months at Mao & Kathy's new tattoo shop in Barcelona. I'm very excited about it. ☺

I WANT TO DO EXHIBITIONS AND PUBLISH MY PAINTINGS TO THE WORLD. WHAT I REALLY SEEK AND HOPE TO FIND IS MY OWN NICHE IN THAT WORLD; TO DEFINE MY OWN STYLE AND EXPLORE IN IT AND ALSO FIND AN AUDIENCE FOR IT.





"For now, as far as what happens to them, well - they decorate my house. I have high hopes for them though. I hope in the future to balance my work between painting and tattooing. As I get older I suspect I will lean more towards canvas, actually. Honestly I cannot say that I paint only for its own sake. I love doing it, but I do hope for

some kind of recognition/success at it someday. I'm in no hurry though.

"Painting is another type of exploration for me. Really, I don't have nearly the experience I need with it and I feel like I'm still trying to catch up with tattooing, technique-wise. As I do it brings another wonderful new dimension to expression."

IS THERE SOMETHING IN YOUR HEART THAT YOU'D REALLY LIKE TO GET INVOLVED IN - LIKE SAY, A HUGE INTERNATIONAL EVENT GRAPHIC - SOMETHING LIKE THAT - IF THEY WOULD GIVE YOU TOTAL ARTISTIC CONTROL?

"I would like to become more in the art world. I want to do exhibitions and publish my paintings to the world. What I really seek and hope to find is my own niche in that world; to define my own

IT'S MUCH EASIER/ MORE MOTIVATING TO CREATE WHEN YOU KNOW THERE IS SOMEBODY WAITING TO SEE WHAT YOU WILL COME UP WITH.

style and explore in it and also find an audience for it. It's much easier/more motivating to create when you know there is somebody waiting to see what you will come up with.

"Apart from that, I have expressed my interest in designing some of the posters and flyers for conventions, but haven't had the opportunity yet."

YOU MUST HAVE A GOOD STORY TO PITCH AT ME ABOUT YOUR TRIP TO MONKEY TEMPLE. I'LL BE REALLY DISAPPOINTED IF YOU HAVEN'T.

"The Monkey Temple is an amazing place in the center of Bali, in a town called Ubud. It is beautiful and appears to be some mythical oriental temple watched over by the meanest little monkeys you've ever seen.

"You do not enter the monkey temple with hanging jewelry, sunglasses on your face or head, or God-forbid, bananas clearly in your hand. The monkeys know it's their temple and all that enters is fair game. They will climb you and take what they want. If you don't give it freely, you will be bitten. The Balinese sell cut bananas so the tourists can feed the monkeys. It can be really cool, but the monkeys rarely have the patience to be fed. The more that they get around

you, the more the little bastards raise up their courage, until you are a jungle gym. Just give up the bananas!

"Mostly though they just chill, assuming you don't have anything they want and are not afraid of them - they can smell it like dogs and will taunt you!

"The statues there take you back



to an older religion and you have to wonder about its origins and what practices might have been involved all those thousands of years ago."

DO YOU THINK THE SAME AS ME, THAT AFTER YOU GET AROUND THE WORLD A LITTLE, YOU SEE WHAT HUMANS ARE CAPABLE OF ON A GRAND SCALE WHEN NO TIME CONSTRAINTS ARE APPLIED - THE REAL OLD SCHOOL METHOD. MODERN STUFF IS SO LAME IN COMPARISON...

"No - I don't think I do think that way. While I will say that I've had the opportunity to witness first hand some of the amazing feats and artistic heights of the past of mankind, I believe they took it where it was going; it reached a pinnacle. Classical art fulfilled itself and mankind moved on. Classical architecture is mind blowing and at times, yeah, I'm quite unimpressed with what they build these days, but where else was that going? How much higher do we need to stack stone? Indeed the disposable architecture of our time is unfulfilling, but that is not going to be the legacy of now.

"Mankind is exploding in other directions now. It is the age of information and we are constantly expanding, learning, and truly finding new dimensions to existence. Just the other day I saw something that has been a long time dream of my own. A company has build the first robotic bird. It looks a bit like a seagull. It gains lift and thrust by flapping its wings and it flies, steering by turning its head. That shit baffles the imagination and I find it completely inspiring... as well as a bit disappointing actually as I've been working on my own mechanical wings design for some time.

"We are encroaching on artificial intelligence and nearly human animatronix. With an exoskeleton, a man can do the work of an elephant. A computer has just beaten the world champions of Jeopardy, and my hand-held cell phone - a miracle in itself - has more computing power and memory than anything that existed a generation ago."

IS THAT MENTALITY SOMETHING YOU BRING INTO YOUR TATTOOING?

"These are absolutely things that enter into my creativity, as both an inspiring and very real part of my process. I have no way to measure what photoshop has done for the way I design and approach tattooing. Once I have the concept for a painting or tattoo, I first start with google images for my reference material. Once I've compiled a stack of imagery, I can arrange it, resize it, and recolor it in photoshop. With the ability to do all that first, my final drawing and paintings take on new dimensions and break into new realms of possibility.



It's like adding turbo-nitrous , or maybe warp drive to your imagination. Now, without that imagination, it's just the spinning of big, useless wheels. But with it, it's like adding wings to a cheetah. I like the sounds of that. I think I shall have to tattoo that on someone!

"Apart from the very real world applications, the frontiers of science, medicine, art, and our understanding of the workings of the universe and the nature of existence are constantly awe-inspiring and influential for me.

"Obviously as a whole mankind can be barbaric and hopelessly ignorant, conniving, ruthless, and often appear beyond redemption, but at the same time we live in amazing times. It takes the whole spectrum. Mankind is not doing what it was doing 1000, 2000, or 200 years ago. That is not to say we don't live in an age different than any other that is no less incredible than it is dire. To let one overpower the other too much is not to know the world we live in. It is a time and a place worth living in and knowing."

Thus endeth the conversation with Mr Policheri, who, as he promised me when we began, talked far too much and ran us out of any room to discuss Dali ("remains one of my favorites, which I believe is apparent in my canvases"), Escher ("I've always had a love for math and that man married math and imagery seamlessly"), Michelangelo, Da Vinci, Caravaggio, and Rembrandt. Lest we forget, also on his list is Giger ("No one will ever be able to measure the effect he has had on the world of tattoo and I need to get my ass to his museum"). However, I will leave you with these words of wisdom that he



THE DISPOSABLE ARCHITECTURE OF OUR TIME IS UNFULFILLING, BUT THIS IS NOT GOING TO BE THE LEGACY OF NOW. MANKIND IS EXPLODING IN OTHER DIRECTIONS.

threw after me as I was walking out of the door:

"We need to mention Guy Aitchison! People don't pay so much attention to him anymore, but fuck, few artists in any medium have affected me more. Oh - and I discovered the work of both Shige and Robert Hernandez on my first trip to Europe in 2005. That was somewhere between absolutely breathtaking and completely destroying at the same time. Two big fat reminders that I'm not working hard enough!" ★

WANT MORE?

If you want to continue the threads of this on your own time - and you will need a fair old whack of it - book a slot with Victor at the Jam! Mr Policheri will be more than happy to make your acquaintance!

WORDS: PAULA HARDY KANGELOS
IMAGES: JUSTIN DAVIES-TRAIN

TRAIN KEPT A ROLLIN'

Justin (Burnout) Davies-Train is impossibly talented for someone not yet 23.

His tattoos are deliciously smooth, punctuated with wit and style, but incredibly finessed.



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Looking to the USA for inspiration Justin is one of the few residents of our chilly isle accomplished in the Chicano style and he consistently brings a new flavour to this well-known imagery.

"A love of art definitely came first for me. I've been drawing and painting for as long as I can remember, it's always been my passion. I found it came very naturally to me and the more I drew, the more my love of art and creativity grew.

"Around the age of 14 I started to take a big interest in tattoos and tattoo art. I guess it stemmed from the kind of music I was into and the older friends I hung around with. I spent a lot of time looking at tattoo magazines and checking out my friends' tattoos, and I became kind of mesmerized by the whole thing. That's when I really decided I wanted to become a tattooist, it's funny but I still have this form from my school that states career choice, 'tattoo artist' and my tutor strongly advising me against it, I told him at the time he was wrong.

"When I got to 16 and had to do work experience naturally I asked all the local tattoo shops if they would take me on. I'm sure you can figure out how that went.



"I had only asked for 10 days at a shop just helping out, so being turned down didn't really crush my hopes of getting into the industry. The one thing it gave me was an insight into how hostile some shops can be and how opening a door wasn't going to be easy. It made me



WHEN I GOT TO 16 AND HAD TO DO WORK EXPERIENCE NATURALLY I ASKED ALL THE LOCAL TATTOO SHOPS IF THEY WOULD TAKE ME ON. I'M SURE YOU CAN FIGURE OUT HOW THAT WENT.

realise that if you don't have something that stands out to offer, something that shows why they should give you a shot, they probably never will.

"At college I studied Fine Art, Photography and Media, and during my two years there I played with the idea ➡



I SPECIALIZE IN BLACK AND GREY TATTOOS. I LIKE THE SIMPLICITY AND APPRECIATE ITS LIMITATIONS; I TRY TO USE THOSE LIMITATIONS TO CREATE DEEP DYNAMICS, CONTRASTING STRONG SHADOWS AND NEGATIVE SPACE WITH SMOOTH AREAS OF TONE.

of going to university to pursue Fine Art Painting but I was always drawn back to tattoos, I already knew it was for me.

"So my next step was to get even more artwork together and just persist at trying to get a door open somewhere. In the meantime I started to tattoo from home, not ideal by any means, but without doing that, I definitely wouldn't be where I'm at right now

"After finishing college in Cambridge and having built up a pretty decent tattoo portfolio, I went on a mission to get my first studio job. I set my sights on about 50 well-respected shops across the country and went to every single one with my portfolio. Some shops were really encouraging and others wouldn't

even acknowledge that I was standing in front of them, I finally got a chance in Nottingham and I packed up and moved from Cambridge right away. I've been here ever since.

"It's hard for me to describe my tattoo style; Realistic meets Chicano with a hint of Traditional, perhaps? I nearly always draw from photographs in order to keep a sense of the real but I'll often end up playing with it a little. I think depending on the subject matter and the size of the piece, there will usually be a difference in my drawing style. I like my work to be as realistic as possible but I also think they need a bit of additional style rather than just copying a photo. I like to get creative with backgrounds



and negative space to my tattoos flow and movement.

"I specialize in black and grey tattoos, as it's a style and look that I've always loved. I like the simplicity and appreciate its limitations; I try to use those limitations to create deep dynamics, contrasting strong shadows and negative space with smooth areas of tone. In my black and grey work 'line' isn't dominant and frees me up to move, flow and overlap a piece in any direction. Other times, when working in a more traditional style I find it a good exercise to construct the main image with line and keep the shading a little rougher looking. I really think you can learn a lot from practicing both styles.

"I find inspiration in lots of places, namely, Chicano culture, west coast style, Lowrider tattoo, lettering and script, Western Traditional tattoos, fine art painting, music, Sullen, Rebel8 and my friends.

"Some of the tattooists and artists that I feel are really doing something special at the moment are Jose Lopez,

EVERYDAY I GET INSPIRED BY BOTH NEW THINGS AND BY FINDING A NEW TAKE ON OLD, REDISCOVERED THINGS.

Jun Cha, Valerie Vargas, Eckle, Manuel Valenzuela, Chuey Quintana, Ben Grillo, James Spencer Briggs, Shawn Barber, Jeff Gogue and Michael Hussar.

"There are loads more but these guys are the ones in my head right now. In fact, everyday I get inspired by both new things and by finding a new take on old, rediscovered things.

"Over the past couple years I've noticed my customers have changed, a lot more people are starting to come to me personally, rather than to the shop. It's amazing, It really feels great to know that people have that level of trust in me, that they believe that I will give them a neat tattoo.

"To the customers that have the ultimate trust in me, I'd like to say thank you for being so supportive and willing for me to run with my ideas and do what I love. ☺



"I really respect anyone who has worked hard, loves what they do and left a good honest mark on the tattoo industry and loves what they do.

"I'd like to thank my girlfriend Louise for being so supportive, Vicky Morgan for being super encouraging and inspiring, Lee (LWB), he's an awesome tattooist and I have learnt a lot from watching him work since I started at BodyCraft

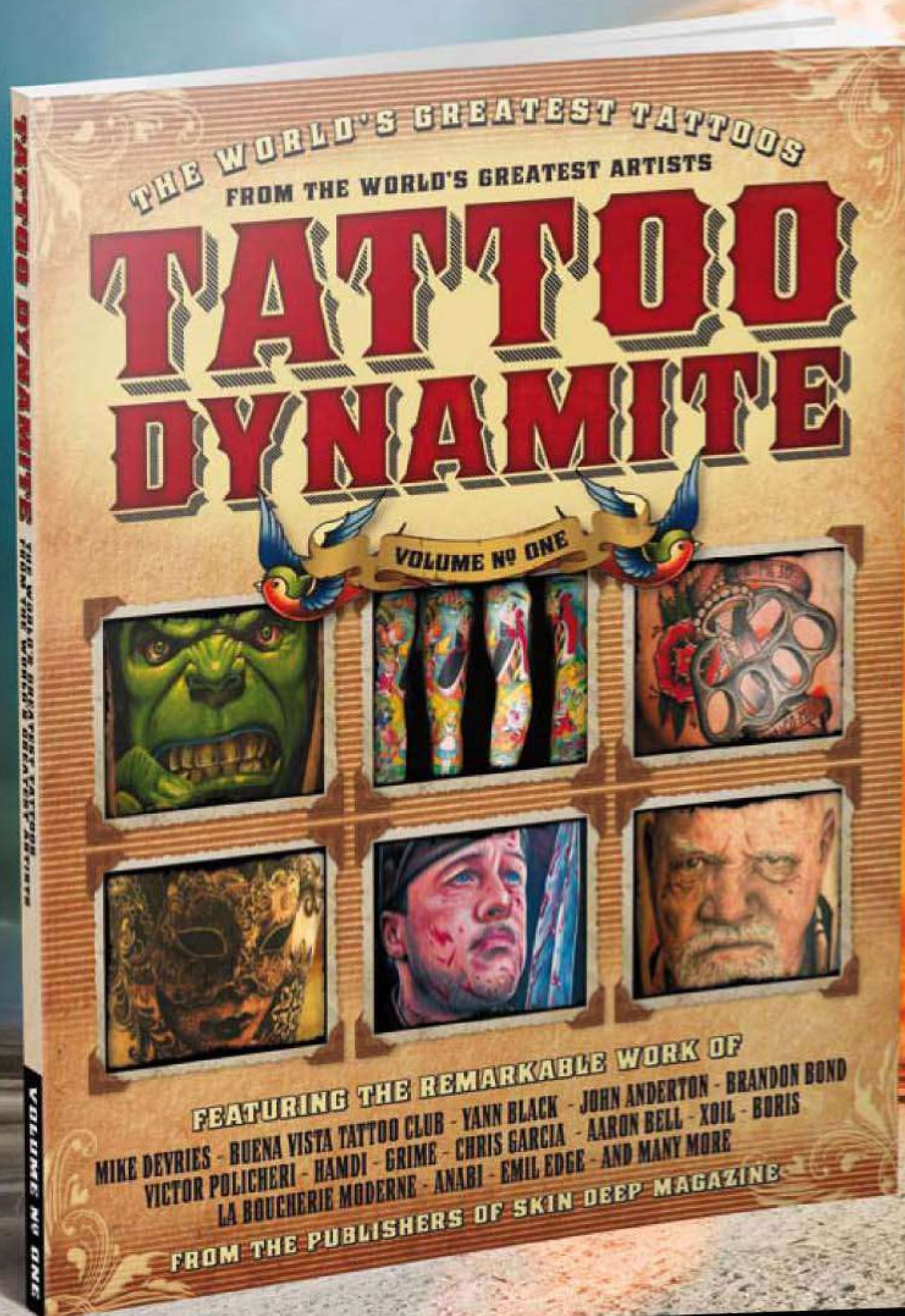
"I'd also like to thank my brother for letting me do my first ever tattoo on him, Kev for being a great friend and Ash for all his help and commitment around the shop.

"I'd like to take this opportunity to mention my late friend, Sumo a great tattooist and someone who really helped me when I first turned up at the shop, I'll never forget all the good times. And lastly thank you to all my loyal customers, inspirations, great friends and family, thanks for everything! ★

**I'D ALSO LIKE TO THANK MY BROTHER
FOR LETTING ME DO MY FIRST EVER
TATTOO ON HIM, KEV FOR BEING A GREAT
FRIEND AND ASH FOR ALL HIS HELP AND
COMMITMENT AROUND THE SHOP**



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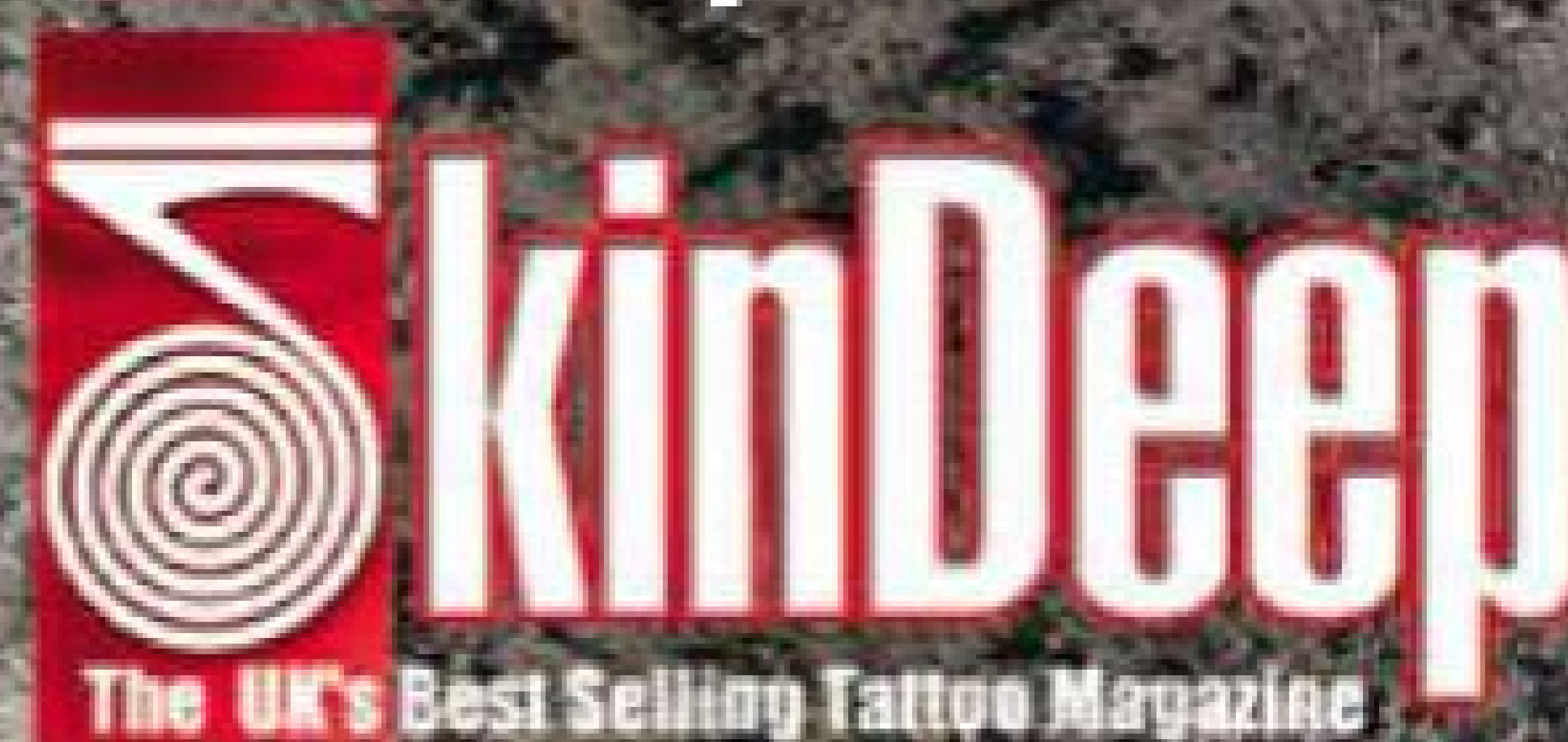
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MY NAME'S SAM, I'm a tattoo artist from Germany who has been tattooing and travelling for the last 4 years. I'm looking to work in a professional studio environment in London. I am reliable, clean, always on time, professional and friendly. My favourite style of tattooing is blackwork and dotwork and I really enjoy doing custom and freehand work, but I also like doing all styles of tattoos. You can check out my work on fb: <http://www.facebook.com/Geokraft>. Please get in touch if you are interested. Ph: 07843797942 Email: Geokraft@hotmail.co.uk

AFTER YEARS OF DESIGNING TATTOOS FOR FRIENDS AND CLIENTS, I started an apprenticeship. Unfortunately after only 2/3 months my wife and I had to move to Cornwall. I most definitely want to carry on my apprenticeship in Cornwall. I'm serious and devoted and would make a loyal and hardworking member to your team. Plus I make a mean cuppa. I have a portfolio and I'm in the process of making it 'online'. If you would like to see my work please email or call me and I'll be more than happy to email it to you or to pop in and see you. Thanks a million. Email: spam.samk@gmail.com. Tel: 07922707059.

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TATTOO UK is looking for a full time professional tattooist to work in our new Twickenham branch. Artist must have a good portfolio. Please contact Matt at matttattoouk@fsmail.net. We are also looking for a full time professional body piercer to work in our Rayners Lane branch. Please contact Tuesday at kissmygrits37@hotmail.co.uk. All applicants should live within a 20 mile radius from the branch you are applying for.

HI MY NAME IS RACHEL, I'm 23 and I live in Liverpool. I'm looking for a body piercing apprenticeship or just the opportunity to observe, I'm hardworking, really eager to learn, willing to work for free. Please contact me on 07759115876 or email me slashrules4ever@hotmail.co.uk

TATTOO ARTIST REQUIRED: Demonic Dermagraphic Tattoo Studio is looking for a tattoo artist to work in their busy shop 8 miles from Bath. A chair has become available due to the 2nd artist leaving to start a new project elsewhere. Must have a minimum of 3 years "working" experience and a portfolio is essential. We are NOT looking for anyone with a bad attitude, over blown ego or drug/alcohol issues. No time wasters or dreamers please. Email: demonicdermagraphic@hotmail.com

APPRENTICESHIP WANTED. My Name is Lucy O'Connell. I'm 20, living and studying in Sheffield in my 3rd year, finishing in June. I'm studying Creative Art Practice, in which I mainly paint and draw. I have an online portfolio in which you can access from the link below. I have no drink/drug or attitude problems only an extremely passionate and serious attitude toward tattooing, I have very good drawing skills and believe I provide good customer service. I am flexible, devoted, ambitious, hard working and make a cracking cup of tea. I would be eternally grateful to be given such an opportunity and can promise you won't be sorry! Thank you <http://lucyanneoconnell.daportfolio.com/> or contact me on 07546223347

TATTOOIST WANTED, for a new tattoo studio located in Dorset. Part time tattooist needed to join our team, needs to have at least 4 years experience and a good portfolio for viewing. Tattooist would need to be competent and confident with both walk ins and custom pieces. For more information contact 01202 738290

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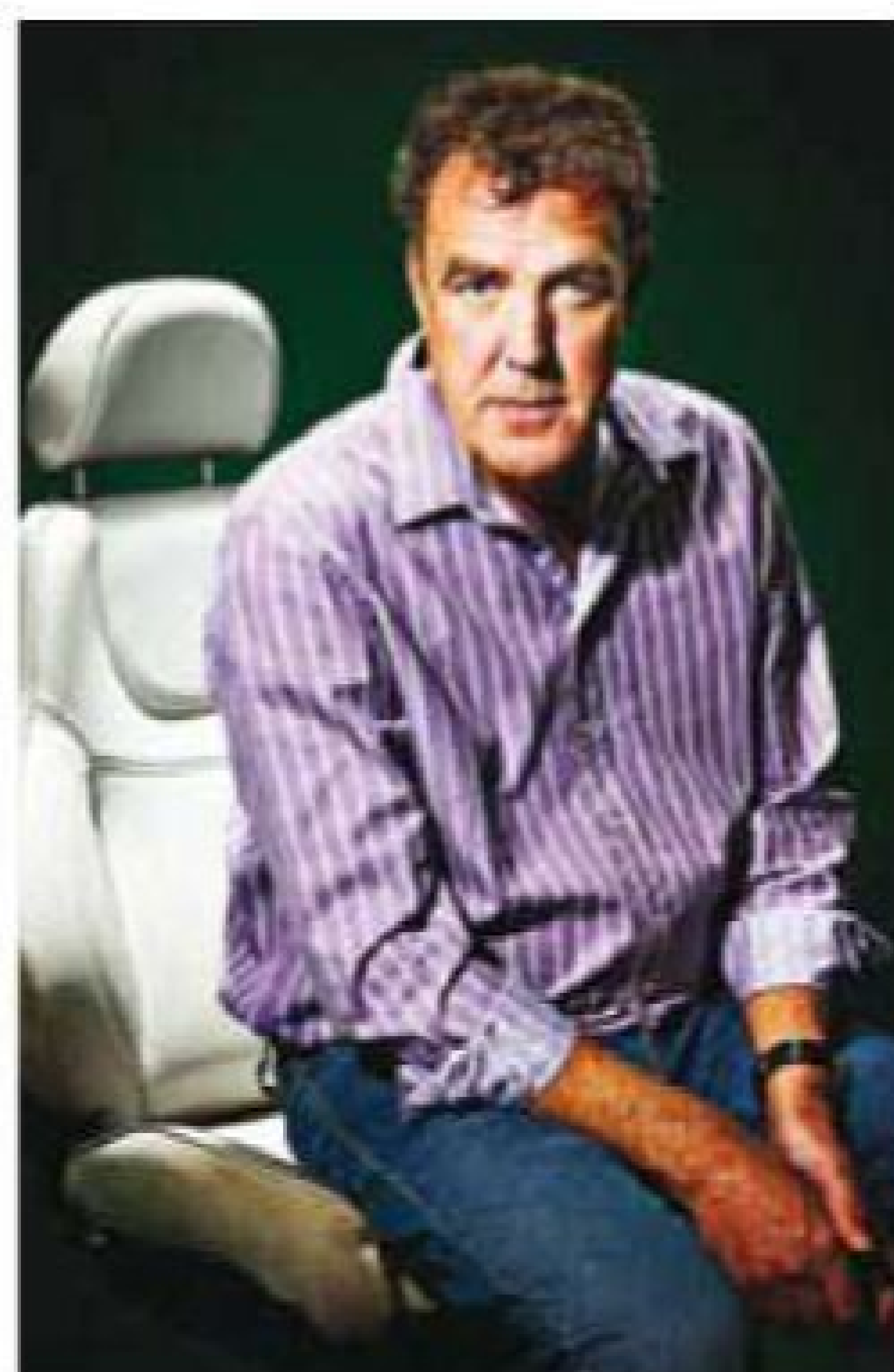
Dear Skin Deep

I've been a big fan of your magazine for many years and am not normally the type to write to anything and complain about its content, but I do feel that in issue 195 a line was printed in the Jesse Lee Denning interview which I feel really could've been left out. I quote "For that jerky creepy somewhat spastic feel" which I would hope as you read back, you see where I'm coming from.

As someone who has relatives that suffer from one disability or another I have never enjoyed hearing any word like "spastic" as it's often used in an insulting way. I'm aware that the oh-so charming Jesse Lee Denning probably didn't mean it in a negative context. However during the editing process did it not jump out of the page at you as something that would have easier to leave out? Conversely, I loved the piece on the sudden popularity of "Ed Hardy" clothing, it really summed up my thoughts on the matter-so keep up the good work! Let's keep our alt' models alt' and feature less predictable old school please!

Cheers now! Jake Belben

Allow me to explain. Having spent enough time in the US over the years, I understand the term "spastic" over there to mean something entirely different. They use it to describe a "jerky, energetic effect" and certainly nothing insulting. However, point taken and personal apologies to anybody offended by Jesse's comment.



TOP GEAR'S OFF ROAD FALL FROM GRACE!

Hi

I normally do enjoy Top Gear, but was disappointed with the tattooing on the off road 4 x 4 test.

I understand that there should always be a light hearted sense of fun - with the similar stunt on 'Jackass' years ago, at least they knew and said it was stupid and only did it on each other.

But regardless to bad taste - in your article the BBC mentioned they had a health and safety advisor and the tattooist had a licence from within the same council area..

Let's look at that. No coverings on the seats, no running water, so no obvious way of washing hands

or any other hygiene in the middle of a field. So not really anything like a licensed tattoo studio then.

And isn't it true that you are licensed by a council for a 'premises' not a 'general area' - surely that's enough to take some legal action without the cross contamination issues.

So on that thought then, any tattoo conventions within Top Gear's set council area needs no licensing as long as the tattooist is licensed in a surrounding area, no aprons, no running water, no clinical waste disposal to worry about and latex gloves are suddenly alright to use, no need for sterile new needles for every customer, no bagging of clip cords or machines and no need for medi-scrub or anything similar to clean down the tattooed area when saliva will do!

I wonder if that convention would be able to run - especially when the last show our studio worked the councils health and safety advisor was threatening to confiscate our individually wrapped lollies for cross contamination?

Maybe it's the councils and the licensing people that really need a revised guideline to correct tattoo industry procedures - not just to cost tattooists more money when it suits them, or to try and look hip and cool for a TV programme.

Rant over!

Julie Clarke.

Flaming Gun Tattoo Studio.

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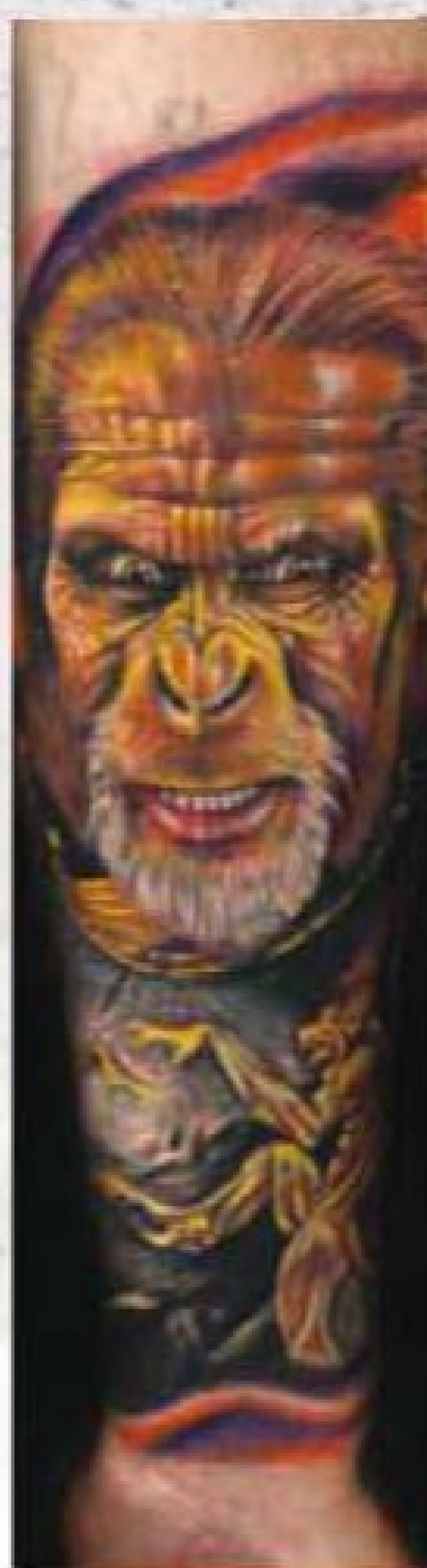
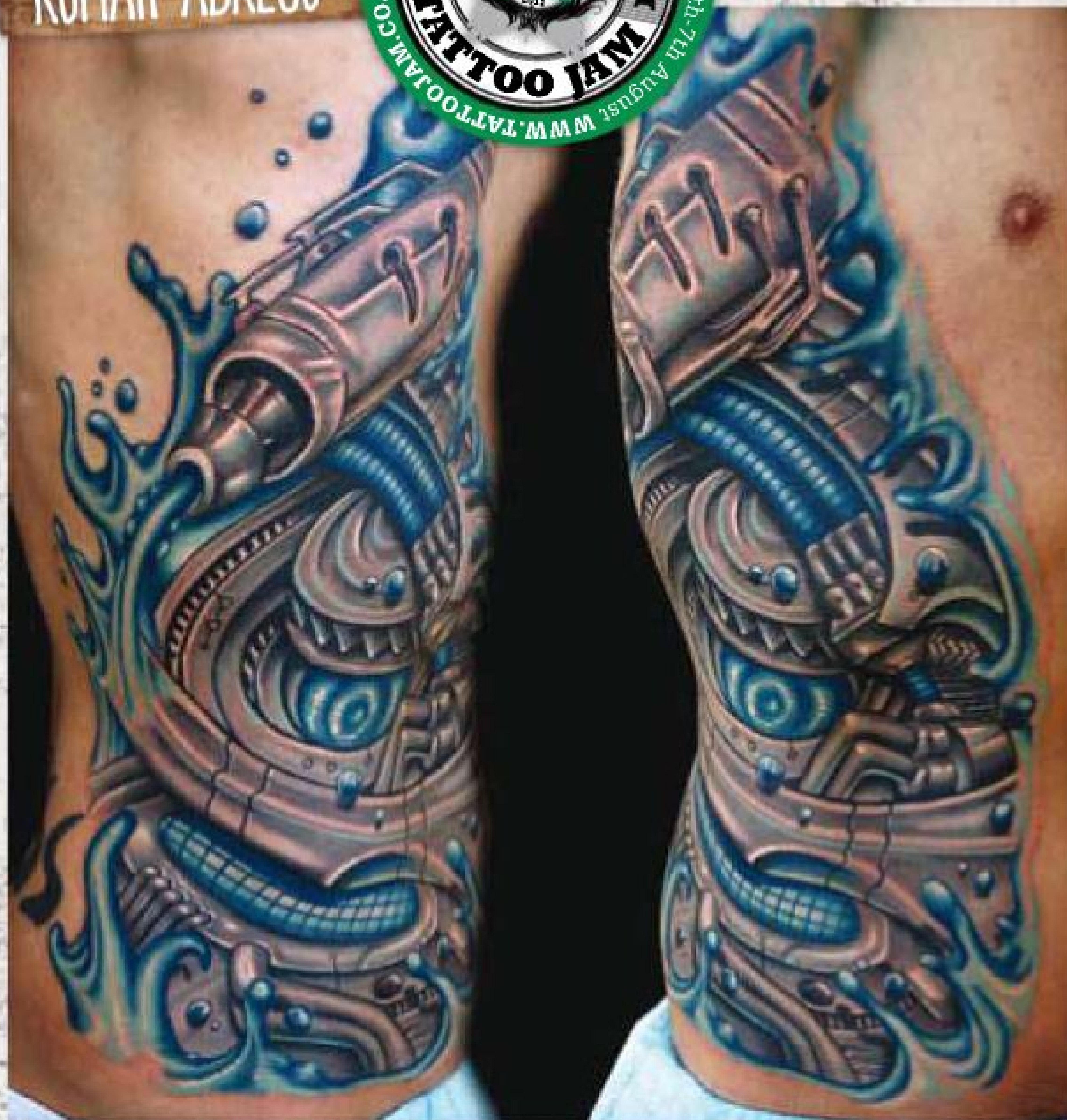
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5TH - 7TH AUGUST 2011

Here are a few artists that will be
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ROMAN ABREGO



RACHEL MCCARTHY



CHRIS LOWE/HALO



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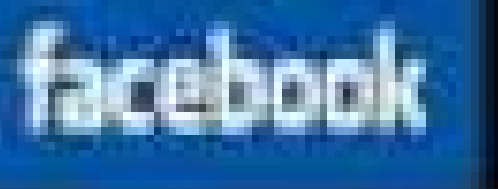
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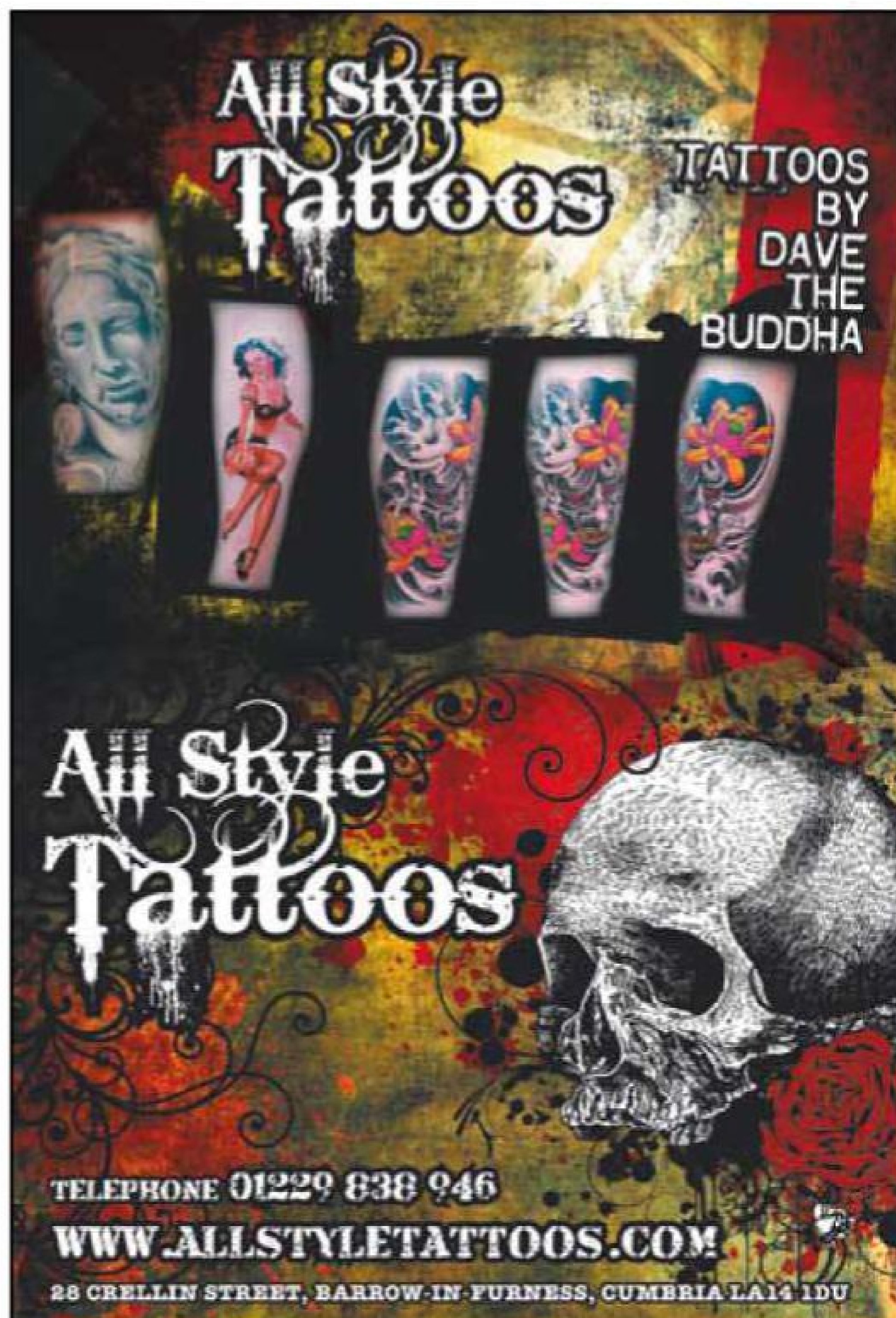
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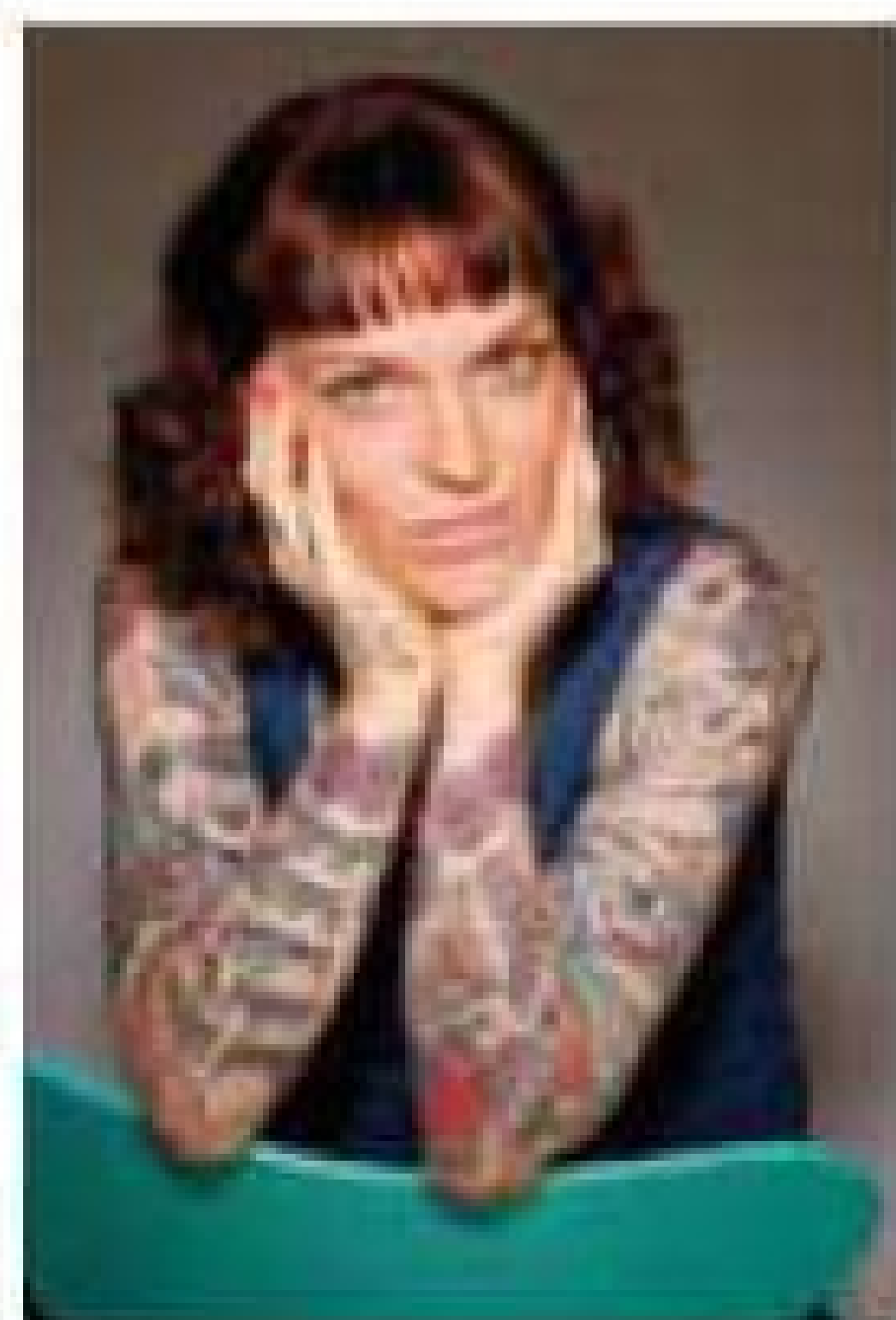


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SELF DESTRUCTION BLUES?

A recent article in The Independent, ostensibly about a charity providing tattoo removal services made a direct link between tattoos and self-harm.
It was an average mainstream newspaper article, not favourable in its discussion of tattoos but not offensively critical either, however, one statement stood out:



Paula Hardy Kangelos

"Tattoos are what many people turn to when they don't have the courage to self-harm".

Tattoos are many things to many people: For some, the pain and a subsequent feeling of release might be a factor; the endorphin rush is certainly undeniable. For others it signifies and celebrates the end of a negative experience, sometimes, it is a transformative process, much like a butterfly emerging from its chrysalis. Many tattoo collectors are simply fans of the art form. Some people fit into more than one of these categories, or none of them. To dismiss tattoos as self-harm for the weak is both overly simplistic and utterly ludicrous.

This willful misrepresentation reminds me of a bible passage, famous in tattoo land, a passage often used to dissuade people from becoming tattooed:

Leviticus 19:28 reads "Ye shall not make any cuttings in your flesh for the dead, nor print any marks upon you: I am the Lord."

But Leviticus 19:28 has been taken out of context, when read with the previous and subsequent passages it becomes clear that the marks mentioned are the marks of false idols - so why are certain persons so keen to twist truths and misrepresent reality when it comes to tattooing?

I think we have to look close to home to find the answer.

My mother thought I was perfect, just as I believe my son to be perfect and mothers everywhere also believe their children to be perfect too.

Our mothers have tended to our scrapes and scratches, examined our bruises, and kept quiet vigil, watching and waiting for our marks to fade, they waited for our skins to go back to being as pure as their love, as blank as a babies life story.

So when the child is grown up and the perfect surface is broken by the tattoo needle, leaving behind a mark more considered, more definite, more

deliberate mark, one much bigger than those of an ordinary childhood, it's hardly surprising that our elders initial reactions are tinged with horror - and perhaps, that horror is verbalized with language more usually associated with self harm.

Self-mutilation is something that many of us have been accused of, or perhaps we've heard the more innocent phrase, "Why has a pretty girl like you gone and ruined herself like that?" Is it easier for those on the outside to dismiss body modification as a symptom of mental illness than it is to examine the myriad appeals more closely? There is no going backwards in time, no returning to childhood and it is precisely this which so horrifies our elders. Our adult markings, like the changing feather pattern of an adolescent bird reminds them that we

Is it easier for those on the outside to dismiss body modification as a symptom of mental illness than it is to examine the myriad appeals more closely? There is no going backwards in time, no returning to childhood and it is precisely this which so horrifies our elders.

can no longer be babied, that they are no longer in charge.

Instead of asking us what we perceive the positives to be, we are told that we must be unhappy, or dislike our naked skin selves, or that we are damaged. When researching tattoos for academic purposes the texts we are referred to are psychological or anthropological rather than sociological, we are told we are victims, not survivors and as we cannot reinvent ourselves and move on due to our permanent ink, we must remain victims.

While it's true that some people find an escape from self-harm in tattoo art, it is not the negative that health care professionals espouse. We are accused of using tattoos as a barrier, told we are shutting out the world, but my own experience is quite different. Rather than building a wall,

my tattoos provide an easy opener, a conversation starter, a talking point - I get curious questions, romantic propositions and comments on my colourful nature. My tattoos do not repel, but instead make me more approachable.

My earliest tattoo memory is the faded, blurry blob on my Granddad's arm. I would sit on his lap and while he was absorbed in an old black and white TV show, I'd examine it, and ask questions, questions that he laughed at but didn't answer.

After he died, my Nan told me that Granddad had bought that tattoo home from the war, along with a battered suitcase and a serious dose of Malaria. That faded, blurry dragon had been hand poked into my Granddad's skin in a prisoner of war camp in Burma, a place further away than my Granddad had ever imagined he'd be. Like many of his generation he didn't speak about his experiences, but he didn't forget them either. My Granddad had dug a hole in his skin and buried his memories inside.

So, rather than a barrier, or a disguise, tattoos are a revelation, the equivalent of wearing the picture on the outside of the locket instead of the inside. My contents are not hidden; I wear them on the outside. I remain true to myself, the tattooed person is always authentic, and the process proves the real. Like a time capsule, we create a hole in the surface and seal our memories inside - only our souvenirs are visible.

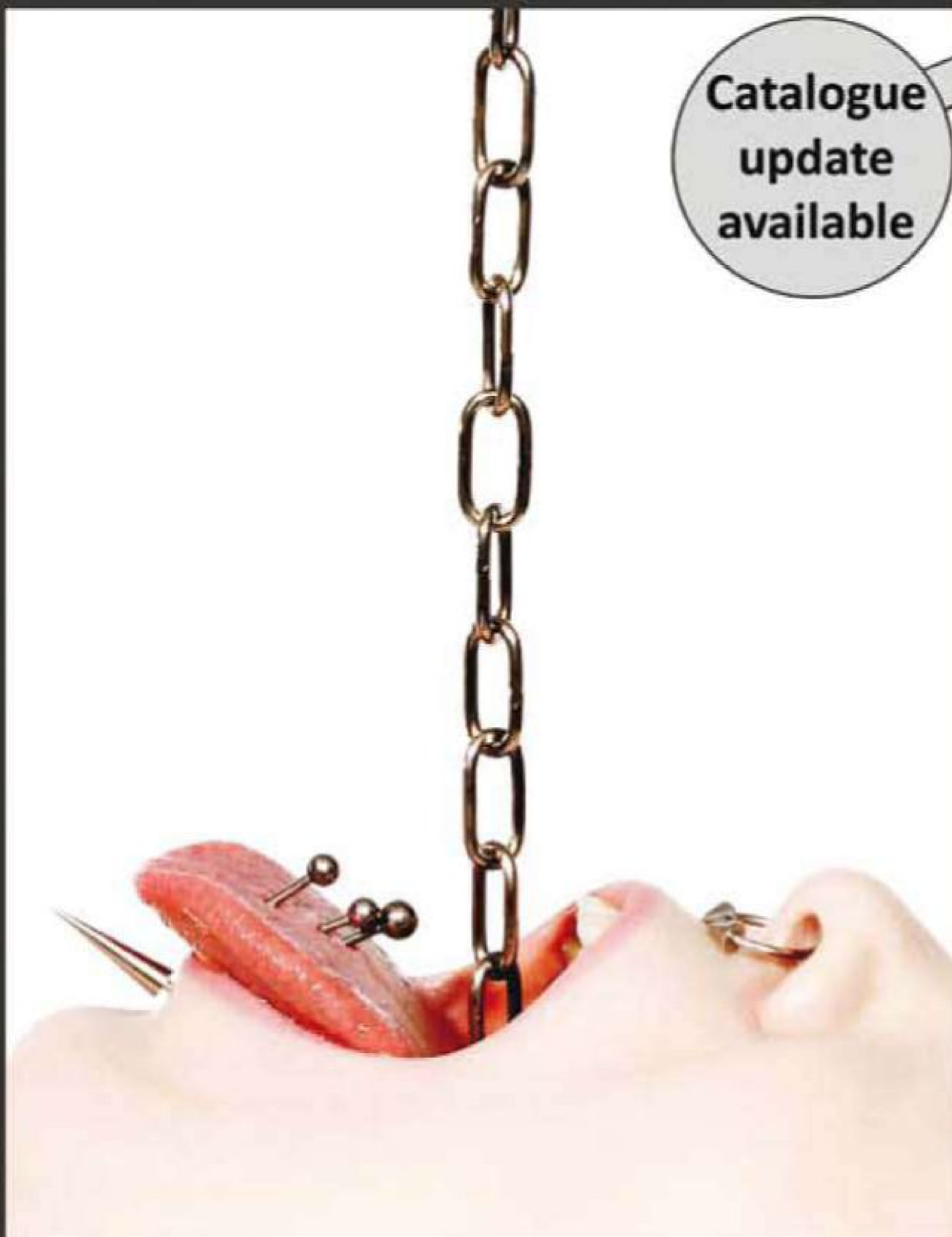
So perhaps tattoos are not so different from self-harm - both can commemorate an intense feeling, both leave a trace of our life's story. Our self-inscribed images do not make us victims, but rather survivors, a special kind of survivor that takes pride in what they have experienced.

Special thanks to forum members past and present at www.bigtattooplanet.com ★



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